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A DOUBLE SECRET

AND

GOLDEN PIPPIN.

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AND

GOLDEN PIPPIN.

BY

JOHN POMEROY,

AUTHOR OF "OPPOSITE NEIGHBOURS," "UNTIL THE END,"
ETC., ETC., ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.



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GOLDEN PIPPIN.

CHAPTER I.

LITTLE MARGARET.

THIS was a day of novelties. Dora knew nothing of the management or requirements of children, but Batting luckily took to them, and her good humour and cleverness took off care from her mistress.

She did not "take a fancy" to her brother-in-law ; he was not the person she had pictured as "Ethel's George." This man was overgrown, and she could believe over-bearing, and taken up with himself, and she felt he had not "taken to her ;" she was the counterpart of his wife, whose demonstrative manner and open warm-hearted ways, had become natural to

him. He could not believe in a depth of feeling under such a quiet manner as Dora's, so he called her "Miss Handon," and her great eyes met his at dinner, and in the evening when he spoke to her, with wonder, and not affection. "She gives no one friendship gratuitously," he said to himself; so he called her Miss Handon still.

Lady Meath had friends at dinner, and Colonel Farnham shone forth to her liking amongst them. All her guests were travelled ones, and he had only just left the ship which bore him from New Zealand, and a medley of geographical conversation took place which greatly interested Dora. Dinner over, Colonel Farnham rose with the ladies, and asked Dora to go for the children; but she saw thunder in Lady Meath's eyes, who had no idea of an invasion of children in her drawing-room.

"Come with me," said Dora quickly, and she led off, to the small back parlour where they found Warna, Adelaïs, and Batting, with little Margaret on her knee, and Hector drawing horses from a book of Dora's, with considerable skill.

"Oh Papa!" was the united exclamation of happy voices. Batting took herself off, and Dora felt so shy as if she ought to go too, for George Farnham, big man as he was, had eyes all glistening with tears, as he took Margaret and in some way encircled all three girls with his fond arms, whilst he looked at Hector's drawings and praised the fine eye of one horse, or a curve in another, and put a touch which developed the nostril of a third, with much judgment.

"Now Hector, you see that is like the copy, and the copy is right; where did you get it?"

"From Aunt Dora, papa."

"Miss Handon draws horses very well," he said; and Dora, though she liked the praise, felt herself relapsing into stiffness when he said, "Miss Handon," and it needed only once more to make her cold and distant for the rest of the evening.

"Papa, how long are we to stay here?"

"I do not know, my boy; why do you ask?"

"Because I like it, papa; I hope we may stay a long, *long* time."

What a relief! Dora thought, there was no

accounting for taste ; to her it seemed a dull life for children, for she knew each day must be about the same in South Dudley Terrace.

Lady Meath had them on sufferance, not from choice ; they were out of her way, so she told her nephew at night that he might leave them as long as he was satisfied to do so. He went away to a lodging near his club, but Dora expected him to say a few civil words which might yet enlist her good-will. He only said, "Thank you," as if Lady Meath's offer were the matter of course, and to Dora he said nothing ; he did not know that she came from Ireland to take charge of his children, or that she was not at Lady Meath's on her own account.

Yet Dora was not dissatisfied, and felt relieved that she was not tied to leave London on a fixed day. She liked the children, and London too, and began to understand the house and its ways ; and, ungracious as Lady Meath had hitherto been, she could trust to her own sense and tact to prevent collision or disagreeables.

The next day Colonel Farnham did not come

till evening. Batting had put the young people to bed, and Mrs. Guys and her cross charge were quiet. Dora had been to see them, and came quietly back to the drawing-room just as he entered, so announced the state of affairs to him. Charlie Meath was the centre of attraction, dressed for a fancy ball at a foreign ambassador's, and having come to pay his respects to his mother, who thawed under the pleasure of seeing her son. She did not know he and Lord Middleton had arrived in town; so he came to her in full dress, which he considered a *coup* worthy of an incipient diplomatist, for he heard she had "du monde," from the Swiss who announced him.

Charlie hated his mother's lectures; he rattled on now, and amused and enlivened her and her guests, as if afraid a lecture should begin when he left off; but when Dora entered the room, he stopped suddenly, rubbed his eyes, pinched his arms, and made a show of awakening from sleep.

"Do I dream? or do these eyes deceive me? am I on English soil, or amongst the green hills of Erin? am I in fact in London, or in a place

called Killerby, in Ireland ? my cousin ! or are you really somebody else ? ”

“ I am really Dora,” she said, shaking hands with him.

“ I am amazed ! I did not expect another meeting at this early date.” And he wanted at once to have particulars of how and why she came.

“ Charles Meath,” said his mother’s voice, “ you will see Mademoiselle de Merignac to-night ; tell her I desire an interview.”

Charles made a little *moue* as he left Dora, to place his hand on his heart and declare he was her ladyship’s most obedient. He detested this “ Old French woman,” because she told tales of him to *madame sa mère*. More than once he tried to talk with Dora, but was invariably interrupted ; so he discovered it was time to go, and made a mock solemnity of kissing his mother’s hand, giving Dora as he approached to say good-night, such a twinkling, smiling, bright-eyed nod, that more people besides George Farnham fell into a mistake and thought Dora must be his *fiancée*. Very little conversation followed, guests left soon after

Charlie, and lastly Colonel Farnham, who was "billeted out," as before stated.

Several days passed, one very like another ; the baby grew more reconciled to his lot, but Mrs. Guys more insolent and noisy than ever.

"Miss, you must let me go," she said ; "I cannot stand this London house and the *imperence* of these fine servants." Another soldier's wife had been with the children during the voyage ; but having little ones of her own, could not remain, and Mrs. Guys was out of her element, and restless and lonesome.

"I think, Batting, we must speak to Lady Meath, and get a regular nurse for the baby," Dora said.

"Miss, if you take my advice, you will get the nurse first, and my lady will never know ; this woman drinks too, and is not safe in the house ; speak to the colonel, miss."

"Oh that would never do ; he would have no idea but to try another soldier's wife, probably."

"I could get one by writing to a friend in the country, if you wish."

"Do write then, Batting, and we will try to

calm Mrs. Guys for a day or two." But that lady was worn out in patience and temper, and made her appearance in Lady Meath's own sitting-room.

"What are your demands, insolent woman?"

"The colonel only owes me two pounds; it is not the money, but I cannot stand your men-folk."

"Be silent, woman! no abuse here, if you please."

Dora had followed as soon as she was aware of the intrusion.

"Miss Handon, give that woman a note for two pounds which Churcher will discharge, and ring the bell." Dora did so.

"Otez cette femme, Henri."

Mrs. Guys followed the Swiss groom of the chambers, and receiving two sovereigns from Mr. Churcher, the house steward and paymaster of the establishment, her bundle and herself were outside the doors in less than two minutes.

A temporary nurse was procured, and Batting found a respectable permanent one in a week, so peace reigned in the household;

but Dora could see that Lady Meath and some of her servants fretted and chafed at the infringement of household rules which her visitors caused.

It was wonderful to her that George Farnham did not perceive how unwelcome they all were; but he went to visit his father and other relations, very glad to have Lady Meath's roof over his family.

Week followed week. Exercise every day kept the children and Dora in health, and she supplied them with new books and drawing materials, and even did some regular daily lessons with them. The thought crossed her mind—how long is this to last? when she considered that it was her duty to try to keep the children happy, supposing that their father was busily arranging something for their future.

Batting heard soon from one of her correspondents that Colonel Farnham was hunting every day at Melton, where he had a fine stud, and was famous for his beautiful horses.

She, like a wise woman, did not spread the report amongst the servants; life in Belgravia was dull enough she found, and the dark days

needed not anger or recrimination to make them harder yet to get through.

Lady Meath apparently forgot the existence of the whole family after the father left, and if Dora had not gone to her dinner, she knew she might have gone without, and no regrets have been expressed. In the evening too, she always appeared in the salon where usually old Made-moiselle de Merignac sat, who had an extraordinary hold upon her aunt's friendship ; always three or four visitors at least were there. Dora made the best of everything ; she spoke French well, and was amused with La Merignac.

One evening she told her about the children, and the old lady quite comprehended her difficulties, though Dora acknowledged to herself that she had made a curious confidante. She did not however give herself the trouble to see these children, but she told Dora where she could find pretty French toys, and ornaments for a Christmas tree, and mentioned a *modiste* who made small dresses *à ravir*, and even a shoe shop. Dora remembered all the addresses which she gave, but she knew the poor children ought to have more attention and better instruc-

tion, especially the boy, and it surprised her that their father did not think of this.

Education was not Mademoiselle de Merignac's forte, but Dora began to form a scheme of her own.

"Batting, it is time to send Hector to school; but I wonder Colonel Farnham does not think of it."

"Time enough, miss; and you see the colonel is one of those easy-twisted gentlemen who think of nothing for themselves."

"Possibly: I dare say Ethel ruled everything."

"He is just the gentleman, miss, to let everything be done for him."

"I wonder when he will come again."

"Not while this fine open weather lasts," thought Batting; "wait for a good frost, and he will be in London fast enough:" but she said aloud,—“He seems rather uncertain, miss.”

Batting was right; hard frost was late in coming; indeed, hunting was not stopped till February, for though the season was damp it was open.

He appeared in Belgravia one day when a little snow was lying on the hard roads. Lady Meath met him with urbanity. He seemed to know how matters stood, and made no inquiries from her about the children or their concerns.

Dora received him kindly, but still coldly ; she thought he might have written, and that he might have said something warmer than, "How do you do, Miss Handon."

He looked handsome when Margaret sat on his knee, and answered all his questions.

"You seem good and happy children," said he.

"Oh, papa, look at my books," cried Hector.

"And at my slippers, papa ; Aunt Dora said I might make them as rich and handsome as I liked, and I have put in beads and floss silk, too, papa ; do you like them ?" and Warn, who had been industrious, presented her handiwork.

"They are almost too beautiful, Warn," he said.

Dora noticed that he seemed in great health, but he was much more grey. Little Margaret observed it, too.

"Papa, you have too many white hairs! More than I could pick out."

"You would make me bald, little woman."

"You are getting a little so, papa."

"Then do not make me worse." He did not like to be told he was growing bald.

"Miss Handon," he said, "I am not going back to New Zealand. I have exchanged, and am now going to remain at Portsmouth, I believe, with the ——th."

"I did not know you ever thought of returning."

"I only came home to bring the children on account of education, because——" But he did not go on. Perhaps he thought of his wife, or perhaps of how little he had done about education since he came to England: he grew silent.

"I should like to talk to you on that subject, when you have time," said Dora.

"I will come to-morrow at twelve."

The young ones claimed him now.

"Papa, baby can walk."

"Can he? where is he?"

Dora left the room to see if he were awake,

and brought him back in her arms ; then set him on his short, fat legs, hoping he would run to his father ; but he made a wry face, and clung to Dora till Margaret crushed his stiff white frock by her little, loving arms, and finally got him to walk to papa whilst she held his black sash.

The performance was not imposing, but must have satisfied the father that his son had been well fed, for he displayed good flesh and muscle.


Dora thought her brother's hair grew yet whiter whilst he played with the baby, and more than once his face looked so full of pain, that her heart felt for him. She knew he grieved about Ethel, and felt the awful responsibility of these young things. Dora was not given to show when she felt, but at this moment she liked George for her sister's sake, and said, almost gaily, hoping to console him,—

“Baby is very fond of me and very happy ; so, Warn, when papa gets a house of his own, and Hector goes to school, you must send for Aunt Dora to mind little Charles for you.”

Warna's father heard it, but made no sign.

Next morning, again, she tried to be more sisterly towards Colonel Farnham, and talked over affairs with him. His new regiment was in barracks, but he said he could not ask her to go with the children there ; but he hoped, if it would not disarrange her own plans, that she could stay with them ; and he spoke openly of how much he meant to allow for the maintenance and education of the party.

Dora said she had no home, and was glad to be with Ethel's children. Then Hector was to go to the College at Radstone, and a governess to be sought for the girls. Dora thought of Marie Vertmann, but he would have no foreigner, she must be English, so Dora's scheme fell ; but shortly after she found that Marie was married ; her other plan had been, if the first could not come, to get Mademoiselle de Merignac to inquire for a Parisienne ; Colonel Farnham finally engaged Miss Greystones, who was able and willing to undertake her duties at once ; and in seven months after coming to Lady Meath's they all took leave of her, having only twice in that period



set eyes on her respected ladyship for a minute, at a time !

A comfortable, furnished house received them all at Croydon, and Batting was delighted at having so large a party to provide for. Dora was mistress of the household left in charge of the girls and baby. Colonel Farnham took Hector himself to Radstone, and then went to his regimental duties at Portsmouth.

From the time of leaving Belgravia Dora heard no more of her aunt than if she had not such a relative, nor of Charlie Meath, who would have looked upon life at Hilda Villa, Croydon, as beyond the region of civilisation, if not of human life ; and Dora might have been numbered with the dead for all the notice she received from any but the household.

Major Talbot took umbrage at her sudden departure from Warringdale, and as she did not consult him after, he ignored her ; and, as she got her half-yearly payments through an agent, she was not inclined to quarrel with her guardian for letting her alone.

The children settled into regular instruction under Miss Greystones, who was in every

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respect fit for her post and a gentlewoman. Dora was glad to throw much responsibility upon her.

People in the neighbourhood offered some civilities; but Dora knew it was not safe to make promiscuous acquaintances, and her days were pleasantly occupied with her duties, and for the rest she preferred to be alone. The "Maiden Household" went on under Batting very calmly, who regularly kept accounts, and had handmaidens at her pleasure.

Hector came to Hilda Villa for his first vacation, and was very tractable and obliging, and uncommonly kind to his sisters and little brother. Colonel Farnham came once or twice to spend a Sunday with them, but slept at the hotel, not wishing to annoy Miss Handon's housekeeper, he said, who, as well as the cook, commended him for propriety. As to Dora, she did not like him enough to trouble herself as to whether people expected he would make her his second wife or not. She saw very little of him, and as he never wrote, and she did not choose to begin a correspondence, she acted upon her own judgment.

The next year old Mr. Farnham seemed to wake up and remember his grandchildren for the first time; for the whole family were invited to Claydon Eaves for the midsummer holidays, and as many rooms were prepared as required, and they went with the understanding that they were to remain as long as they chose.

Even then, Dora did not like to write to Colonel Farnham; but, relying upon the probability that he must know all about it, accepted the invitation.

It was lovely, leafy June, when they set out—Dora, the five children, Miss Greystones, Bating, and a nurse. The journey was a great delight, and the view of Claydon Hall, with its woods for a background, formed a fine picture. The village was most picturesque, with a real village church, all covered with ivy, and foliage of tender tints beyond, and a nice, contented looking parsonage just beside it.

They drove close to the church and through the long village street before they approached the wide gates of the park. They had lost sight of the Hall again, but it reappeared after

a short drive, at a turn of the avenue, and was a welcome vision.

Grandpapa came out of his study to receive the large party in the entrance hall. He was a fine, handsome old man, and Dora saw he was pleased with the children. He spoke fondly to each, and made a good impression upon little Charles, who was most gracious to him, and testified that he was quite satisfied to arrive at Claydon Eaves; and also that it was his will and pleasure to ride his grandfather's thick gold-headed cane, which especially pleased the old gentleman, who remarked a precocity of riding instinct, worthy of his sire; and he gave his stick to his grandson with a cheery smile.

Ample accommodation had been made for the visitors; and Dora, having seen all comfortable, joined Mr. Farnham and his maiden sister at dinner.

She felt happy with this aged pair, and her contentment broke out in happy words. Every day was full of enjoyment, and the beautiful country and bright weather enhanced the charms of all the spots they visited.

Mr. Farnham was a model old gentleman, and master of the house, with the most courteous and affable hospitality. Miss Farnham wore handsome silks, and fashionable bonnets ; but they were such as became her age, and Dora found her a delightful companion ; she told agreeable stories, with a little touch of satire, about all her neighbours, but only enough to heighten her word pictures.

Even during the life of Mrs. Farnham, Miss Fanny had always had a home at the Hall, and she said the dangers of matrimony had never assailed her. Her brother could tell of a certain lover who once even aspired to kiss her hand ; "but Fanny trotted him round the table and left him in the lurch at last," so he made away with himself.

One day a tall, pale lady came to pay a visit, and her peculiarities diverted Dora for a long time after ; Miss Fanny said her paleness was only assumed, because it suited better with her style of features, and that a mixture was taken daily by Mrs. Brooklyn to produce the "pure white."

She was a rich widow, and always meant to

marry again (which she did eventually, and took a man with eight children, too) ; but her house was kept in such rigid order that it was painful to enter it ; a perfect brown holland palace, Miss Fanny called it, for she declared that once she had gone there earlier than usual for visitors, and the large drawing-room presented a most extraordinary spectacle, " a large green baize dome occupied the centre, surrounded by smaller ones."

Dora stared.

" Yes," said Miss Fanny, " it is all true ; the lady herself explained that the fact was, the tables were covered with fine books and ornaments, which were never touched or used, and thus covered every day, after five o'clock, with their green baize extinguishers, to be lifted off at a certain hour next day to display the gilt edged books and fine things for a given time."

" Where did she live, then ?"

" In a small back room beyond the parlour, where she daily counted her plate and linen, and was so occupied when I called ; in fact, she brought in her hand the key of the room."

"She must be frank and honest," said Dora, "to tell you this, at any rate."

"So she is, and can be very agreeable when she likes; her servants get used to her ways, and know that her lonely life accounts for it."

"Has she no relations?"

"No near ones, or any who require her aid."

"Does she never work or read?"

"Never, I believe; yet she is anxious to have books for her servants, who like their situation well enough; she supplies them with magazines and periodicals; and her butler does beautiful work."

"Her butler?" said Dora.

"Her butler, yes; he is always at something for her."

"What kind of work?"

"Regular Berlin work, and sometimes crochet."

Dora looked unbelievably.

"I assure you, Mrs. Brooklyn got into hot water with some relations last year about this."

"How?"

"A niece died who finished during her long illness a fine piece of work for a screen ; it was sent to Mrs. Brooklyn by her mother as a memento ; it was a handsome thing, well-coloured, and wrought upon silk canvas."

"Well, did she refuse it ?"

"No ; but she thanked her sister-in-law coolly, and said she did not admire work upon that style of canvas, but she would get Williams to ground it before it was made up."

"And did she ?"

"Oh, yes, much to the disgust of the poor mother. It now flourishes in a rosewood frame in the fine drawing-room, with a brown-holland pinafore over it, like the stools and chairs. The relations never forgave her for sending it to the pantry for its finishing touches."

Miss Greystones and her pupils met with the most touching kindness at Claydon Eaves by Mr. Farnham ; a pony carriage was given over for their use, and a donkey with panniers for little Charles, and his "Golden Pippin."

Margaret was his favourite, but never once

did his lips pronounce her name. She had a tinge of golden auburn in her hair, and a thoughtfulness in her eye, and a charm which every one acknowledged, but only the grandfather knew that it was the extreme likeness to his own wife. The wife of his youth had the same *fil's d'or* through her hair, and the soft, tender eyes of little Margaret, and her name was also Margaret.

The old gentleman christened this grandchild "Golden Pippin," but called the rest by their names. It might be fancy, but Dora thought the child grew like him, and that Miss Fanny had not so much affection for her as for her sisters, and evinced something like jealousy when her brother petted her too long, and let down her long hair from its net, between himself and the sunshine, to gaze on it silently.

"What a figure you make that child, brother," she would say; "I am sure Miss Handon will not like such untidiness; Margaret, go to nurse and get your head put neat." So Golden Pippin fled; and she had been Golden Pippin for some weeks when Dora casually opened a large Bible and saw "Margaret Farn-

ham, her book, from one who loves and prays for her," on the title page, and she knew it was his wife's Bible. "So he calls her Golden Pippin because he cannot use his wife's name, dear old man," and from that time even Dora called her young niece Golden Pippin, too.

CHAPTER II.

FORESHADOWING.

MISS FANNY liked Dora, and took her to see all her friends ; and one day she was told they were to have luncheon at Mrs. Brooklyn's.

The drawing-room was divested of the extinguishers, and some of the brown holland—not all—but was without a particle of dust. Meddlesome Dora was attracted by a book which, from its binding, she took for an album.

“Oh, please, Miss Handon, if you want a book, I will fetch you one from the other room ; we never use these,” said the hostess.

Dora was vexed with herself for having forgotten all Miss Fanny had told her, and drawing back her hand, sat down to admire the lilies and roses which the poor dying niece had wrought, and regretted, too, that Williams had

not done his work better, for in some places he had drawn the wool too tight, and made the grounding lumpy and clumsy, and in some places had infringed too closely on the young lady's flower buds ; but Mrs. Brooklyn saw no defects. There was a piano, and Dora asked, "Do you play much?" To which Mrs. Brooklyn replied, "No, I never play at all ; but if you wish, I will fetch the key ; only please do not play any vulgar tunes. Once I opened the piano about a year ago, and a young lady played 'Kinloch of Kinloch.'"

Dora smilingly assured her that she did not care about vulgar tunes ; but she would not give her the trouble to get the key ; she believed she could survive without music till she got back to Miss Fanny's piano at Claydon Hall.

The luncheon was plentiful and handsome, and was going on quietly till a fine dish of asparagus came, and was handed with attendant tongs to the company.

"Oh, please do not use the tongs, you might drop them," said nervous Mrs. Brooklyn. So Miss Farnham helped herself without their as-

sistance, and Dora did the same. Mrs. Brooklyn was still nervous now till the end of the meal, for preserves and fruits were served, with rich dessert dishes, and silver knives and forks; and when all was over, Williams and his boy stood quite still, whilst Mrs. Brooklyn rose, as it appeared according to custom, took each plate from the table and emptied its remains into the fire.

Till then, Dora had been surprised at seeing a fire in such warm, beautiful weather.

"You see, I am old maidish in some things, Miss Handon; these knives and forks I never allow to go out with fruit-stones or apple-parings, lest one should be lost or hidden."

"Pardon me, madam," said respectful Williams, "you have dropped a fork into the fire."

"Oh dear me, so I have! I did the same too last week. What a pity."

Nobody moved; apologetic Williams allowed the lady to get her fork out of the flames, and descant upon the discoloration of the ivory, without a word, it was his lady's way—what was it all to him?

Miss Fanny even restrained herself when on

the point of showing that the risk would be less in allowing the forks to go out to be washed in the regular mode, but Dora felt sad, and sorrowed over this perverted life, and this poor lonely lady who could find time only happily employed in counting her forks !

Hector came after midsummer, and his joy at riding with grandpapa knew no bounds ; the old man, delighted with the boy, wrote to George to get leave, however short, and come and see his young ones. Miss Fanny added a postscript that he must come and keep his children from being spoiled ; every one conspired against them, especially Golden Pippin.

Colonel Farnham joined them soon, and Miss Fanny saw he had the same trick as his father of letting down Golden Pippin's hair, but nothing could spoil her ; her nature was too angelic, she was as obedient, gentle, and guileless as child could be.

Warna and Adelaïs had made great progress, and Miss Fanny told their father he need not be ashamed to meet his enemies in the gate, and he was proud and happy about them all.

He gave Dora *carte blanche* to buy or to order what she chose for them, but never had the grace to say, "I am indebted to you for taking charge of them."

Dora did not mind now ; she had plenty to live for. Warna told him about their studies, and she and Adelaïs played duets to him, and talked of how good Aunt Dora was, and the little boy called her "Dora" without prefix, and ran bravely after his father with a voice that claimed attention.

He was less pained now with that child than at first when he looked on him as the cause of his losing Ethel. Time had dispelled his misery, and he found the care of his family so small, thanks to Dora, that he likewise could enjoy the present.

Claydon Eaves was like fairyland that summer, it was a season of indescribable loveliness ; with all the blessings of affluence and health, none could feel unhappy.

Golden Pippin led Mr. Farnham and her father to the rose-garden, and like a butterfly she glanced from one fine standard tree to another, measuring the *Géant des Batailles*

with her tiny hands, raising some matchless bud for them to see, and making them admire one flower after another.

"Which rose do you like best?"

"The rose *Céleste*, papa."

"Why, Golden Pippin?"

"Because it speaks of Heaven."

Her face, and especially her eyes, had something so like Heaven in them that both men grew silent. There was something in Golden Pippin, in her busy moments or in her quiet ones, so flower-like, so weird, her little figure was so lithe and so pure-looking as to strike beholders with a notion that she was not of earth. Colonel Farnham walked on, the child began to talk of New Zealand, and he asked,—

"Do you remember Mana Tatu, Golden Pippin?"

"Mana Tatu died, papa."

"So he did; and Wanga Miti?"

"He was very good; I should like to see them all again, and mamma too," she added.

More than a tinge of sorrow was on George's heart as she talked of her mother, and the

Maori names wakened up New Zealand memories. The child went rambling on,—

“Mana Tatu and Taoti Wa both died, so they can see mamma, and I look through the blue sky and cannot see her yet, but——”

“Hush, my Golden Pippin, no more.”

The child walked home gravely by his side. She was not able to take long walks like her sisters, and grew tired of playing with noisy Charlie; so it often happened that she strolled about with the old gentleman and his son. The elder watched her with strange delight, as we look at a sunbeam entering by a chink in the early morning; it is a foretaste of light and the coming day, and Golden Pippin's gentle ways always seemed to her grandfather to speak to him of Heaven.

CHAPTER III.

THE SOUTH EQUATOR.

MANY times Dora thought of Lady Meath, and asked herself whether she ever remembered herself and the children, for she made no sign,—in fact, her ladyship was more interested in receiving travellers, especially any one who came from Malacca, Sumatra, or any very far distant spot, and her interests appeared to be bounded on one side by Rangoon, and on the other by a river of unpronounceable name. She thought and heard more of the Bramahputra, the Firawadda, or the Burrampooter, than it would have been believed possible.

Eastern travellers, like all others, love to find a willing listener, and one who knows something of the ground of their excursions, and who could understand the nature of the

places their books were to render celebrated ; such sought out Lady Meath, whose best days had passed in Further India, and who dwelt upon the days of her exile with tenderness,—the only tenderness in her character, except the pseudo fondness for her son.

She could scarcely remember her brother's face, as she parted from him in early youth ; and what did she care for Dora, whose mother she had never seen, and only heard of her as one whose people were in a contrary direction to hers ;—Brisbane, Australia, what were they to her ?

She liked Dora sufficiently to fear Charlie might like her too well, and he had not stability, she knew, to withstand attraction, and he was engaged to Gertrude Broom ; but Dora left her, and once out of her sight she forgot her as completely as she did Ethel's girls. Colonel Farnham, when in London, did not fail to pay his respects, and he told her with satisfaction of Hector's school progress—she might be of use to him perchance. No troublesome questions were asked about any one else by either, and Lady Meath did not inquire

the whereabouts of Dora, or else Croydon was not beyond the power of a visit.

Her *chère amie*, Mademoiselle de Merignac, told her several *on dits* about Colonel Farnham ; but they fell to the ground, and she had no concern in his doings.

The time came for Hector to go back to school, and for leave-taking with grandpapa and Aunt Fanny, for they all left together ; and Dora, having no inducement to linger by the way, saw themselves established at Hilda Villa at Croydon, and tried to get into old ways again. But the pleasant interruption at Claydon Eaves made it difficult to settle down for some time ; those weeks had been so full of pleasure and comfort, that they could not be passed over, without feeling regret that the present could not blot out.

Miss Greystones fretted outwardly more than did Dora, who was not of so demonstrative a nature, but she found Croydon dull and hard to bear. She missed the kind old gentleman and his sister, so sprightly and bright, who cast sunshine about her.

Did a perfect stranger see Miss Fanny for

the first time, he might say, "What a plain woman," or even "What an ugly one!" She had never had beauty, but her figure was good, her ways refined, temper excellent, heart genuine, and a voice so tender that she was beloved by all, and respected too; her principles were just, and since her youth her friends had always esteemed Miss Fanny. Later in life, she was quick and keen witted; as her brother said, she never made mistakes. Great affection existed between those two; and as the sister never cared to marry, she liked her brother's house better than a small home of her own; and even during his earliest married days Fanny was in nobody's way, and Margaret, the young wife, even till she became Margaret the old wife, liked to have her sister-in-law at the Hall, and in sickness or in health, preferred her society to any other; and when the house used to be full in the season of hunting men, and whilst Mr. Farnham was master of the Bourne Hounds, and the very attics filled up with visitors, Mrs. Farnham could rely upon Miss Fanny for help in any way, and she never relied in vain.

Margaret Farnham was as fond of horses as her lord, and a beautiful woman and bold rider, one who looked well in the field, as well as did credit to the sports ; she rode even after her son brought Ethel home, and George thought his mother never looked so well as when riding beside his wife.

Her death was from the effect of a severe fall, which produced partial paralysis ; and nothing could equal the gentle care and tender ways of Miss Fanny towards the invalid. For months her life was preserved, but health was gone ; she lingered till weaned from life, and died, with her husband and Fanny in equal grief.

Mr. Farnham could not be persuaded to be master any longer ; the hounds went to some distant connection, Sir Henry Arden. Mr. Farnham could not see the hunt again ; and with his sorrow, the master of Claydon Eaves let old age overtake him ; he had hitherto resisted its attacks.

Miss Fanny began to fear he would fret himself to death ; he would see no one, even his son was too great a trial when he came

home wifeless also ; but Miss Fanny planned the coming of the grandchildren, which gave, as she expected, a new impetus to life, and his devotion to them seemed to augur well for lengthened days.

He even began to talk about the future, and George heard what improvements were yet to be finished, and alterations to be made ; it was only when he had Golden Pippin by the hand that his sister felt uneasy. He and the child clung together during those summer days, and their conversation was of those who had gone before to their rest, and of how soon they were to follow ; they had strange sympathies, these two, the old man and the young child.

And Golden Pippin had a dreamy look in her eyes, and sat thinking, in a little chair by the window, when the others were at play on the lawn, and when Miss Greystones or Dora asked why she did not go out, she would rise and join them for a few minutes, and then be seen walking quietly ; a daisy or two would attract her, and she would sit down to make a little chain of them, but look weary when she had finished.

Dora grew anxious when she saw her full of thought ; but Eliza Batting combated her anxiety.

“ The child is growing, miss, and feels tired, —all children do at her age,—and very likely she has growing pains in her knees ; but, like yourself, miss, she is one who would suffer anything rather than complain.”

“ I believe Croydon disagrees with her.”

“ Well, miss, after Claydon Eaves, she must feel a difference like everybody else ; and her grandpapa was so very fond of her, and, indeed, even the colonel himself seemed to make her his pet, and yet Miss Adelaïs is his very picture.”

“ She is growing like him every day.”

“ Miss Warna will grow up very handsome ; but at the Hall the old servants say Miss Margaret is just their own lady over again in both features and speech.”

“ None of them are like my sister.”

“ They say Master Charles is the very ditto of her, and Master Hector resembles her too.”

“ It seems strange,” said Dora, “ that I cannot trace any likeness to what I remember

of her, in one of them. I remember my sister's marriage, and how I learnt to write early, that my letters might be sent with mamma's."

Batting was not satisfied about her young mistress having no acquaintance with any one about Hilda Villa; she said she lived too much alone, and was in terror lest Dora should die an old maid; even Batting knew very few people, and did not like the maiden establishment to be so deserted; she had, no doubt, her own little love affairs, but still made cook below stairs her confidante with regard to their mistress. Jane Adcock agreed with her that it was a shame for a lady like Miss Handon to live cooped up, with "nobody coming to marry her, nobody coming to woo!" Why it was like a convent altogether—never a gentleman's voice in the house at all! Jane said after that she was fit for a nunnery any day, no doubt in her estimation the only qualification required being to do without a gentleman! Yet had any one ventured to offer another situation, Jane's resentment would have been great.

“Another place? And where could I get a better? Miss Handon gives the highest wages, and where should I get less work, and no gentlemen to scold, and trouble with his tantrums, and dirty the stairs with his great shoes, and be for ever in and out. No, indeed, I know when I am well off!”

The maiden establishment found time slip away with or without consent, and winter was at hand.

Batting, entrusted with a full purse, was sent to London to purchase warm clothing for the girls, and to choose a silk or two for Dora.

A day in town was never denied her when she asked for it, but her pleasure was intense when sent to the West-end shops with orders, and to have to choose a bonnet was the summit of bliss! Now she could talk about her lady's taste, and feast her eyes at the same time, and wish she dared take something brought by the patient and assiduous attendants. But Batting knew that Dora would only wear a quiet thing, and the young people concluded that her lady had not a very

youthful face, in spite of her protestations, as she only bought grey or violet for anyone.

Dora had never worn gay colours since her mother's melancholy death in a strange and public hotel, and though latterly she had dressed the little girls in pink or blue, she preferred sober tints. Her life was not of the butterfly kind ; there was nothing brilliant in her surroundings, such as young women of her station usually find to seduce them into gaiety of manner and apparel ; yet Dora was happy and contented, but never looked to the future.

Eliza Batting had many stories about Colonel Farnham and attractive ladies, but any rumour of his doings in or out of Portsmouth never reached Dora's ears. She had no correspondence either to fill up her morning hours ; one or two trite notes from Miss Fanny Farnham reached her, but these were limited to the health of her brother and self, and Dora's replies were almost as brief.

All the winter went by, and pleasantly too. Hector went to Claydon Eaves, and did not visit them at Christmas. Plenty of books and work occupied the long evenings ; and Miss

Greystones was cheerful, and though no strange faces joined them, the usual festivities were enjoyed.

A whole year went by, and Christmas came again ; Dora could hardly believe it, but so it was.

The little ones, Margaret and Charles, walked out with the nurse, and more than once came home in April with a load of sweet things and toys. Nurse said "the gentleman had a dark complexion," and that was all they could learn about the giver. Batting and Miss Greystones only attributed these gifts to the extreme beauty of the children, and the man had called Golden Pippin a fascinating little creature ! So nobody thought it very remarkable that a gentleman of dark complexion should look at her and little Charles "with envy, poor gentleman," nurse said.

Even Dora never guessed, though she disliked the presents and sweet things particularly, that the man had come from the "South Equator" to look after her and to find if she were lonely ; but when he made the discovery that she was happy in taking charge


of Ethel's motherless girls, he left again ; he dreaded her refusal, and yet paid no heed to what he heard, viz., "that Dora and Colonel Farnham were only waiting for the passing of the Act to be made one !"

Bishop Broom knew Dora would never think of marrying George Farnham ; he did not know she loved, but he did not think she would love himself either, or that he dared to hope for her in prosperity. But he loved her with a warm fidelity that could wait, and watch, and guard her with his strong love from harm ; and at intervals, though she did not know, he hovered about her ; unselfish, great-hearted man, contented to see her at a distance, and to know that she was Dora Handon. Still, he could wait till after long years had tamed her too evident dislike to him, which she had shown in Paris ; and having seen her, he set out on another long journey to Bagdad.

CHAPTER IV.

ALONE.

DAILY military affairs do not give pleasure to read about, the routine so needful wearies. Colonel Farnham began to feel sick of its action, and sometimes wished himself back in New Zealand. So a repetition of his daily doings would be worse on paper. Sometimes he envied a brother officer who gave up the army, and retired to cultivate his new purchase of a few acres. Claydon Eaves would come to him in the natural course of time, in a few years certainly, but it wanted good resolution to be patient, and ennui molested him; his brother officers, gentlemen all, down to the youngest cornet, did not interest him, though he had no fault to find. No pains were spared at the mess table to brush away his cobwebs,



and the mist which hung about him ; yet, as far as barrack life was concerned, though all went well, he was tired of it ; he missed his wife, was separated from his children,—so grew moody and stern.

Escaping from dinners and balls, which the neighbouring people gave freely, he cast about him for some solitary amusement, and seized upon photography. A good camera and the best chemicals were supplied from a man in London, whose address had been given ; and under proper instructions from the same house he was soon deep in positives, negatives, and collodium, and set up his apparatus in earnest, both for views and for portraits. Under the artist who was sent down to him he became an able amateur, and achieved all that amateurs aspire to.

Stereoscopic views, portraits, in groups or singly, occupied him in turn, till he had not time to turn himself ; with drawers full of negatives waiting to be printed off, he yet made more attempts ; and people flocked to him, ready to be posé at every moment.

He had visitors in plenty, and at last said,

smiling, over a successful *carte de visite* of Colonel Trevor, "I must establish a name, and stamp Farnham on the back."

"You have made extraordinary progress, and do not black your fingers like most amateurs."

"Sometimes I confess I do, but we have an acid ready to remove stains. Now I must present my masterpiece to Mrs. Trevor." So he took a picture of her husband which had been subjected to all the necessary conditions of photographic existence, and then coloured and stippled with exemplary patience, till it looked like a fine miniature.

Mrs. Trevor was loud in her praises, and wanted one of herself to match it; then one of each child, and there was always a chorus about him.

"Oh, Colonel Farnham, when can you do me?"

"Oh, Colonel Farnham, I wish you would take Geraldine, or Mary, or Arthur, or some one," till he wished he had never set up in amateur photography; so he tried to turn a deaf ear, but the constant, "Oh, Colonel

Farnham, Johnny wants my picture."
"Please, Colonel Farnham, do Tip's for me."
"Jessie likes Mrs. Trevor's picture ; when will you do her ?" till he had to beat a retreat and do nobody, for his orders were too numerous by half.

During his photographic mania, Batting's many friends told her of the run upon Colonel Farnham, and how the ladies surrounded him from morning till night ; but nobody told her about his waste of chemicals or albumenised paper, or her fears would have led her to dread a stop in the quarterly payments which came hitherto so punctually.

No doubt some ladies did hope he would choose a wife to be ready to keep his fine old house for him when he got it ; but even Batting could never make out that one lady was more in favour than another.

For himself, he chose no one. If Claydon Eaves had become suddenly his, there was Miss Fanny to go on there, he had found no one to succeed Ethel yet.

Month followed month and he did not

marry, although he had taken portraits of ladies by the dozen. At last he packed up his camera and betook himself to Croydon to see his children.

Variety was what he sought, life palled with him, but as yet no temptation to marry again had assailed him, nor had any woman had power to make him feel he could even do with her as his wife.

So he, with his apparatus, arrived at Croydon, and the next morning Hilda Villa saw him with his servant laden with articles, and he set to work. Warna and Adelaïs were delighted. The lawn was beginning to be covered with daisies again, and little Charles, who was allowed to pick them and the dandelions, said they were his favourite flowers; he owed a little grudge to the bright ones in the borders, for his aunt and nurse forbade his busy fingers to touch them!

Charles made a fine picture with his fat fist full of dandelions, and a whip trailing after him.

The sitting-room was very soon full of pictures, and when every body had been taken

and retaken, the artist again grew weary, left his chemicals at Hilda Villa, gave up his lodgings, and set out on a little tour to fill up his leave, and the Maiden Home resumed its quiet till Midsummer.

Hector alone went to Claydon Eaves ; Miss Fanny wrote for him, but said nothing about the others. Dora was sorry not to have the boy with his sisters, but his pony and all the temptations at the Hall were greater to him than to be given up, so he went from Radstone direct.

It was well, for in one more week the girls and Miss Greystones together fell sick of fever ; for many days Margaret and little Charles escaped, and were kept separate ; and in this emergency Dora wrote to Miss Fanny, to ask if it would not be well to send the little ones to Claydon Eaves. Miss Fanny, wonderful to relate, was from home, and in the north of Scotland, where also Colonel Farnham was visiting, and he replied to Dora that he did not wish to trouble his father this summer, and hoped her fears were without foundation, and that the fever was of a mild sort.

By the time the letter came Golden Pippin had grown listless, and baby Charles cross, and nurse knew the infection was spreading to them.

The hot long summer days and sultry nights were full of anxious care to Dora. From bed to bed she passed with a hired nurse, and good kind Jane and Batting to assist; but the nurse recommended by the doctor was harsh and dry hearted, used to suffering, and apparently only anxious for death to close it; her only care being that her own creature comforts should never be neglected, and at last her ceaseless "Now, ma'am, you stay here a bit whilst I go down for my half-pint of beer," or "Now, ma'am, I am accustomed to take a mutton chop at this hour," or the more frequent "I feel I must get a cup of tea," caused such disgust to Batting, that she resolved to get rid of her, and in case Miss Handon or herself should fall ill, she would not be at the mercy of Mrs. Simmons.

They applied to the Institution of Nursing Sisters, then in its infancy, but which is composed of educated, respectable women, fitted to

act with judgment, and Dora wrote to the head of the Sisterhood to explain her case and its requirements ; and on the second day after application a cab brought to Hilda Villa an individual about forty years of age, plainly and nicely dressed, with a smiling face and pleasant words ; and " Sister Pritchard " took the patients one and all in charge, and organised and kept up a regular system of attendance and repose, so that her presence was a real benefit and comfort. No one felt it more so than poor Miss Greystones, who had fretted about Dora, and dreaded lest she should fall a victim to watching and over-exertion, till she grew worse herself. Now she quietly obeyed all " Sister Pritchard's " injunctions, and felt there was some one to care for Dora.

The new nurse paid the greatest attention to the diet and regular rest of the fever-smitten ones, but even more to the others in the house, and by open windows, and care, so diluted the infectious matter as to render it less fatal.

Strength put forth to resist contagion is a great matter, and a cheerful influence pervaded all the house since this true Sister of Charity

arrived, a most perfect nurse-tender, and cook for the sick. Beef and mutton under her guidance produced more than an ordinary amount of nourishment, and no one acknowledged her talent more than Jane Adcock.

The air was sultry still, but the rooms, shaded and ventilated, formed a portion of nurse's care. Every comfort for every person interested her, and Dora and the servants soon were able to take their turn of five hours of undisturbed sleep. They were not all running together, or all sitting up at night; no waste of energy took place, nor was anything forgotten before the night-watch began, which frequently sets a patient into worse delirium than the fever well managed will produce. The quiet soothed the patient, even if it could not create sleep.

In a month Sister Pritchard had quite endeared herself to Dora; she felt that under Providence she was indebted to her for the lives of Adelaïs and Golden Pippin, who had suffered more, and were so cut down that Nature seemed to have no power to rally. Poor little prostrate Margaret looked spent, as

if life were nearly extinct. Warna could swallow her claret or beef-tea with less difficulty, her constitution was more vigorous, yet she raved, and had the fever more violently than the others, but was the first to throw it off. Little Charles began to run about again, and until then Dora did not know how weak she had become ; she tried to carry him one day in the garden, and her arms relaxed their grasp and she put him down, when his cries brought Batting.

“Are you going to faint, Miss Dora?”

This roused her, and with a little smile, she said,—

“I hope not. I think I was going to Batting, before you spoke ; I hope I am not going to have the fever.”

“Never think of it, miss, you are tired out ; come into the house, Sister Pritchard will give you something.”

So she did, and Dora battled against it, and threw off the fever, and began to regain strength.

She sat thankfully watching the rain, some days after, as it pattered on the window-panes,

or was sucked in gratefully by the thirsty plants and dry grass in the front small garden which divided them from the road ; and as she watched it she thought of the children's father, and how completely he had neglected them during the long illness. Had he forgotten them, or did he trust them so implicitly to her that he felt no anxiety about their fate? She could not make up her mind how it was ; she had excused him to the children, Miss Greystones and the servants, on the plea of infection being liable to be carried by letters ; but she did not excuse him to herself, and asked if he would come to see them in their convalescence, or take them out of Croydon for change of air, or whether she ought to propose it to him. She wrote to him to prevent Hector's coming to the house before he returned to school, and she did not think Miss Fanny would like to have the trouble of attending to his wardrobe, so Dora had sent a list to Colonel Farnham of what she knew the boy must require.

So she sat thinking and thinking, resting her body in a long arm-chair and trying to rest her mind upon some spot in the future, but

she could not; these children were dear to her, but at any moment, such was her tenure, the charge of them might be entrusted to another.

Then she tried the argument that she was Ethel's sister, that George Farnham was glad to have her with them, and would ask her to spend her life with them; yet his strange cold manner to her would remind her that he must dislike her, and would be glad to have her relinquish her hold on their affections, and as yet he left them with her, year after year only because he could not help it; and so she tortured herself with the possibility of losing them, till the future seemed a dark black gulf to her, and she must battle with it *alone*. *Alone* was her usual sensation, she had really not one to sympathise with her except Miss Greystones about the children—all else was lonely and dim.

Alone she was at that time certainly, for Batting hoped she was asleep; she had looked in once and retired with a quiet conscience that her mistress was in a state of complete repose. Something haggard in her face told of

a dread that was going on within, and so Bating hoped a quiet hour would do her good, and she and Sister Pritchard amused the children and kept Charles from awakening the aunt.

Repose she needed, but Dora did not sleep; she dreamed, but was not refreshed by her quiet time. She was in the midst of her torture when the postman's knock gave a signal that some one in the silent house was to get a letter.

The school-room maid brought one for Dora; she recognised Colonel Farnham's hand-writing and welcomed it. Tearing it quickly open she read her letter.

“DEAR MISS HANDON,

“Our quarters have been changed and rechanged since Portsmouth till I forget what peace is. To-morrow we shall be *en route* for Ireland. I have to go with part of the regiment to Naghan, and as it will probably be for some time, I hope you and the children will follow. I am told there are pleasant places by the sea within a few miles. I enclose £50,

as you will want extra for your removing.
Follow as soon as you can.

“Truly yours,

“GEORGE FARNHAM.”

The letter fell. Dora closed her eyes. She did not faint, or weep, or stir. It was her way to be very quiet; but a little gleam, an inward spark this time illumined her future, for as she sat, a smile broke over her features, and her brow became smooth and girlish, her mouth grew placid, and lines which told of care were gone.

She sat still and played with the letter, and toyed with the banker's draft, and soon her eyes opened, and a resolute look spoke for her being well able to make all arrangements, as Colonel Farnham had left her to do.

How he confided in her! Not even a word about the health of the children. She only said “He is a strange man,” and let her delight at going to Ireland make up for all the rest, and a blush too suffused her countenance as a face came before her which now she might meet again, for it was to that part of Ireland they

were to go, and it might have been southward or northward! and the face and eyes were before her, and the tones of the voice as distinct as when she once heard them—now years ago. This thought was without self-torture. She never once asked herself, “Is he there still?” “Shall I ever see him?” “Is he yet as he was?” No, she was going thither, and it was enough.

CHAPTER V.

LIGHT BREAKING.

DORA rose from a long reverie and went to the room in which Sister Pritchard sat with Golden Pippin on her knee. Miss Greystones was lying on the sofa, and Batting pouring out tea.

“You look better for your rest, miss. I said to Sister Pritchard all you wanted was rest, and I was sure you were asleep, for I never heard you move ; Jane shall bring you some fresh tea.”

“No, thank you, not alone, I will take it here with everybody else.”

She took her fresh tea, which the maid brought up, there, and did not explain that she had never slept, or add a word about the letter ; she must keep her delicious secret to

herself for one night—her chance of meeting the one in whom her heart delighted.

It was so like a woman, this hidden love—too uncertain to dwell upon, too vague to think about; but too precious to lose, and too dear to impart to any one.

So Dora sat and drank tea with the children and Miss Greystones, and spoke to them in her usual tone when spoken to; and at intervals pondered about her sweet breaking of light in the future.

Adelaïs, too delicate to sit up long, was the first to be carried off, then Sister Pritchard and Golden Pippin left the room, and Miss Greystones affectionately thanked Dora for all her care and trouble with her.

Dora trembled; she took her thin hand and pressed it, saying in a low, sweet voice,—

“I hope we shall be many happy years together, dear Miss Greystones,” and big tears filled her eyes, and dropped one by one upon her lap, coursing each other down her cheeks, an unwonted exhibition for Dora, who seldom showed feeling outwardly; but Miss Greystones attributed her emotion to over-watching and

anxiety, and not to a demonstration of unusual happiness, as it really was.

The next morning another letter came from Colonel Farnham, advising Dora to sail at once, but to remain at Killerby, where he would join the children, as he heard that small-pox was raging at Naghan.

The letter pleased Dora in several ways: it pleased her most that it expressed anxiety about the children, which she could not but interpret into haste to see them; but chiefly it was a letter, and she need not confess the one of yesterday, which had wrought such revulsion of feeling in her heart; there was something so sacred in those moments which she had spent after receiving it, that it was a boon to her to keep it now entirely to herself, and as the second had followed so soon, she need never refer to the first at all; in speaking of arrangements the second was sufficient to proclaim and to act upon.

The note of preparation sounded at once. Dora told Miss Greystones and Batting that Colonel Farnham was under orders for Ireland, and that all were to follow.

Sister Pritchard rejoiced; the change would be so beneficial—she did not like the Croydon house for them. Dora wished she could go too, but the rules of her Institution forbade her to stay when not on real service, and she added,—

“I have had two or three summonses already, but I did not like to leave you as long as Miss Adelaïs was so weak; ask a doctor in your new neighbourhood, and I think he will order sea-bathing for Miss Farnham, but not for Miss Margaret, and he will say Miss Adelaïs is never a fit subject for it.”

“Thank you,” said Dora; but so deep a flush suffused her face that Sister Pritchard found herself repeating her words to herself to find if she had inadvertently said something strange; she was surprised at the blush, but not to distress Dora by seeming to notice it, she went on with advice about Miss Greystones and Master Charles, which Dora took in gratefully.

Batting was always great in emergency cases, and how glad she was to move away from Hilda Villa and Croydon, none can tell; she did not care where they went.

"But there's one comfort, Miss Dora, if we are at Killerby and find it hot and noisy, we can easily move to Warringdale. How the dear young ladies will enjoy the wood, and no fear now of cross old Major Talbot. How he used to torment you, miss!"

"Yes, poor old gentleman."

"It will be strange, Miss Dora, if we were to take the same house."

"Yes, it seems strange now our going to Ireland at all."

"Yet, for my part, I liked the shopping at Naghan; and the people are all so civil in Ireland."

"I liked the sea bathing in that lovely spot, and I hope we shall get some more; it will not be too late in the season, for the autumn is delightful, both at Killerby and Warringdale," said Dora.

"I am glad to see her in such good heart," said Batting to herself, as she went away to give orders about twenty things.

In a week they were under weigh; the invalids were glad indeed to get away from Croydon, all the servants were thankful, and

the kitchen-maid begged to go with the cook to Ireland.

Dora, meanwhile, had written to the agent, and got a reply that the house she had formerly occupied was now let till the first of November, after which time he would be happy to let it to her for so much, till the first of May. So she thought they might take lodgings at Killerby until then, when she would propose Warringdale for their winter residence, if Colonel Farnham did not object.

The railway was little trouble, and they had a fine passage by steamer; and, when they landed, the father met his pale girls with every appearance of affection, but shook hands with Dora in the stiffest manner, as also with Miss Greystones and Batting immediately after; but Dora did not mind, she presented his daughters to him, after their precarious days at Croydon, when their young lives seemed to hang on a thread, and she felt very thankful that the time was over; she was thankful, too, in being near him, for he could not leave *all* the responsibility upon her any longer.

"I have ordered breakfast," he said; "I am sure you must want it; and he took Warna, and approached the "Royal Hotel," surrounded by a swarm of idlers, with good-natured, merry faces, who followed them the short distance from the landing-place, profuse in offers to carry luggage, run messages, find lodgings, or do anything to serve the strangers.

They were a large party, and it was not without inconvenience that breakfast was got over.

"I have taken a house for you, a mile or two from here," said Colonel Farnham.

Dora's heart fell; she was silent.

"Warna is to have sea-bathing, papa, but not Adelaïs," said Golden Pippin; but her father took no notice. "I thought, Miss Handon, you would dislike Killerby at this season, it is so full, but Warringdale will be a good climate for winter; Naghan, I am told, is very cold."

"Yes, I believe so. There is a good house at Warringdale that will hold us all, which we can have on the first of November, if you like," said Dora.

"Have you been in Ireland before?" he asked.

"Yes, I lived at Warringdale, with my guardian, for some time."

"Then you will be able to make what arrangements you please," he said. And Dora feared he was about to shuffle off his responsibilities again, so said,—

"But your arrangements will be better."

"No ; my quarters do for me. I should not like the children to live in the town of Naghan, they shall be at Warringdale, and I will go by railway to see them, it will be good for me ; and now, if you are ready, we will start by the next train to your temporary abode, which I hope you will find comfortable. I ordered in such supplies as I knew would be needful, and I see you have brought a complete staff of womenkind, as I thought you would. Now, Miss Handon, the omnibus waits, if you please, to convey you to the station."

There was a little stopping-place within a few miles, called Enwarry, and there they all got out of the carriages. And close beside were the entrance gates of a nice country

house, which pleased Dora so much with its first aspect, that she said it had quite a home-like look about it.

“Yes, but unfortunately its owner is coming back very soon. I got it as a special favour for a few weeks; it is not usually let. Enwarry Lodge is the name of the house, and the small station is for the convenience of the squire, who paid a large amount for the said convenience; he is abroad now, and he, as well as his wife, Lady Michella, is exceedingly fond of this place.”

“I do not wonder at it, the situation is so beautiful. I suppose she must be the Lady Michella I once saw for a moment at Warringdale; the name is peculiar—my cousin, Charles Meath, pointed her out to me; but I never heard of her marriage with Mr. Enwarry. People said she was engaged to Lord Middleton.”

“So I believe she was, but she is a Roman Catholic. Is she as handsome as report says?”

“I thought her the most beautiful person I had ever seen,” replied Dora. “Is Mr. Enwarry a Protestant?”

“ Indeed, I do not know, I have seen neither of them, but I ventured to ask them if they would let me their house, and they treated my impudence better than it deserved, and said they were pleased at my admiration of it—— but here we are at their abode, let me introduce you to the fine views from the windows. I am very proud in having succeeded in getting so pleasant a spot for you all.”

It was indeed a pleasant spot, not very extensive, but beautiful in every way. An arm of the sea ran up all the way to Naghan, and the gardens and pleasure grounds were terraced and overlooked the water.

Some fastidious people found fault with the railway, but Lady Michella and her husband both approved of it, for trains passed every hour, and enabled her to attend mass early or late at the fine chapel of the Sacred Mother at Naghan, and Mr. Enwarry kept a yacht at Killerby, and took the train up or down as he chose.

They were a very independent pair, having met and married at Rome, and though, as far as anyone could judge, tenderly attached to

each other for the three years of married life, so far neither had interfered with the religious views of the other. People had said that Lady Michella would never rest till she had made her husband a good Roman Catholic; but she seemed to take but little trouble about the matter. They would come to Enwarry for some months, then disappear for long intervals; but the house was kept always in such perfect order, as if a sudden return at any moment might be anticipated. It had never before been let, or lent to anyone, till Colonel Farnham applied, and got it, a little to his surprise.

Dora was charmed; there was refinement throughout, and comfort combined with elegance, which the most utter fault-finder could not but acknowledge.

Colonel Farnham saw she was pleased, and the girls looked less pale already. Batting had put her "staff" out of sight, and set them to work at the materials for an excellent dinner, of which the master was to partake, for this once, with his family.

"I will get a day soon," he said, before he left by the last train, "and go with you down

to Warringdale, and see the house there. In the meantime, I hope you will all get strong here."

The very next day Dora brought out her sketching materials and set to work; on every side were fine views, and the season afforded beautiful tints and varied foliage. Her pencil or water-colours amused her for several days—wood and mountain, sky and water, were all looking their best for her; she grew so occupied that Miss Greystones had to remind her about the bathing.

"Oh, never mind," she said, "let well alone, we hardly require sea-bathing here; Warnar is growing quite strong, this is such fine air, and bracing enough for anyone." The next day came Colonel Farnham, ready for the promised drive to Warringdale. The house did not please; it was badly furnished, and the occupants had latterly been low, vulgar people, who had allowed dirt to accumulate, and the disorder contrasted strongly with the perfect purity of Enwarry Lodge.

"We must get some luncheon for the children," said Dora, "I had no idea we should

be so long, they are not strong enough to go so long without food. Shall we get biscuits in the town ? ”

“ Or,” suggested Batting, “ if you will go through the wood, I will bring a nice luncheon to you ; ” and, having obtained permission, she departed townwards, to seek amongst people she remembered the materials she knew would please all the party. Dora and the children enjoyed the waiting ; they knew Batting would return furnished with all needful things.

Colonel Farnham declared his intention of “ taking a dip,” as the sea looked so inviting, and he left the others at the entrance to the wood, where they sat down to rest and watch the passers-by, till the father should come back and join the pic-nic under the oaks.

Several cars passed, laden with people, and country women in their clean white caps, and girls with shawls or petticoats over their heads, for the Irish girls love this eastern style of dress, which is also most becoming to their faces.

A carriage or two drove slowly along, full of ladies and sweet smiling little ones, enjoying

the air, and the tempered sunshine, veiled as it was on the beautiful wood road.

Dora began to wish she had her sketch-book, and then Golden Pippin grew tired of sitting still, and her aunt told her to wander about and gather some flowers. Dora sat still and gazed upon the quivering sea, till, after some minutes, she turned, hearing footsteps coming from behind, and Golden Pippin talking earnestly to some one; the trees hid the path from her, but the voices were approaching.

"I think," said the voice, "you should not wander too far; do you know the story of Little Red Riding Hood?"

"Oh, yes; the wolf got her, but I am not far from Aunt Dora."

"Where is she, then?"

"Just at the gate, and she told me to find flowers."

"Come with me, I am not the wolf."

"No, I see that, but I require flowers," persisted the child.

"What is your name?"

"Margaret Farnham; but I am seldom called so."

“Not called by your name? how, then?”

“No. I am only Golden Pippin.”

At this moment they turned the path round by the hazels and came in sight of Dora; she had recognised the voice, and now saw Dr. Morton. His eyes shot forth a ray of brightness.

“Miss Handon!” and they shook hands. Then he stopped—could the child, Golden Pippin, be hers? No, he answered himself, for he saw the other children further on, and so he gave himself up to a delicious joy.

Dora felt as if some moment, some crisis, had come, she had held out her hand to meet his, silently.

“When did you come?” he asked.

“Only to-day.”

“To-day? from where, may I ask?”

Dora saw he was strangely glad to see her, so she began to explain, in few words, all that she thought he would care to know; a well-bred lady to a well-bred gentleman can tell the story of a life in few words.

“These children are my sister’s, she died in New Zealand; their father, Colonel Farnham,

is quartered at Naghan, and has taken Enwarry Lodge for them. I have been with these children ever since I left Ireland; indeed, I hastened to meet them when they reached London."

"They look delicate."

"Yes, but they had fever in the summer, and we are glad to have change of air for them; they were both quite strong before the fever."

Insensibly his manner grew a little colder, a shade less bright, for he was sure that Colonel Farnham must feel so thankful to Miss Handon, so deeply obliged to her for living with his children, and supplying their mother's place, that he might requite her attention with love, and make her their step-mother—they might only be waiting for that long talked-of Act of Parliament to be passed, which would make marriage with a deceased wife's sister the most natural thing in the world, so he reasoned. Then he had taken that most beautiful place, Enwarry Lodge, which was known to be so embellished both inwardly and outwardly, by the fine taste of

Lady Michella, that it was considered the gem of the neighbourhood. Colonel Farnham must be a rich man ; independently of his high position in life, he must be wealthy to think of renting such a house ; at any rate Miss Handon was immeasurably superior to her adoring Melville Morton, who could never aspire to her hand ; so it would be better for him at once to trample down the hope which had burst into existence, upon meeting her again, to crush the germ which had sprung up in his heart, and to resolve to grapple with his passion.

Dr. Morton was timid, and consequently grew doubting, in the intensity of his great love.

Could he only have known lonely Dora as she was, how differently he would have borne himself, life would have been worth having, and he could have borne even martyrdom had any hope of Dora been allowed to flourish in his breast. Alas ! like many another in this life, he judged only by appearances. What could she—handsome, well dressed, cherished by relations, caressed by those beautiful children, living at Enwarry in the midst of refine-

ment and luxury—how could she care for him? Golden Pippin came towards where he stood in his painful reverie.

“Will you come to see the Enwarry gardens? and I will give you such flowers as do not grow here; they are beautiful there, and in plenty, and there are apples with rosy sides, and—but when will you come? I will show you all over the grounds!”

“Thank you, I could not walk so far.”

“Have you no carriage? Are you poor?”

“I am very poor,” he replied.

“Have you not a horse?”

“No, nor yet a pony.”

Golden Pippin sighed, and Dora took courage for a moment, and said,—

“There is the train, little one.”

“Yes, you could come by the train from Killerby,” said the child, gladly. “You would not mind coming by railway?” And a beautiful medium she was, and none can say what his answer might have been, or how warmly it might have been given, for Golden Pippin had thawed the thin iced covering which he had so painfully laid over his heart, but Warn-

and Adelaïs came down the hill at the instant, saying,—

“Here comes papa, after bathing, and Batting bringing two boys with baskets. Where shall we spread out the luncheon?”

“Colonel Farnham.”

“Doctor Morton.”

Dora said over their names, and a very few words of distant civility passed after the introduction. Colonel Farnham busied himself with the contents of the baskets, and helped the girls to spread a table-cloth, and cared for a jug of cream assiduously, and called an apple pie “Golden Pippin tart;” indeed, he played with the child, and seemed light of heart, and happy in every sense, and Dr. Morton made his adieux in full assurance that Dora would in due time be made the second wife of the man who was so occupied in arranging refreshment for her, as scarcely to return the parting bow of his adversary, for so jealous Melville construed his abstraction; he little knew how Dora had felt his cold ways long ago, till they had become habitual to her, and she ceased to notice him.

The cold chickens, the tongue, the fresh butter and cream, elicited praise in turn, nor was bitter ale forgotten ; Batting had catered well for all, and the boys were replacing the empty dishes, and remains of bread, &c., in the baskets.

“Do you know any one else here ? there is plenty of time for a visit, if you like, Miss Handon,” said Golden Pippin’s papa, who was always a very agreeable person when she sat on his knee.

“Thank you, I should like to see Mrs. Roberts at Warringdale Lodge, it is not far.”

“Then take Batting, and leave me in charge of the three young ladies,” he said.

“Shall I come back here ? ”

“No, we will walk quietly back to the carriage through the Lodge grounds. I suppose we shall be permitted ? ”

“I think Mr. Roberts seems flattered when strangers admire the Lodge,” Dora said.

“Good-bye, aunt, we shall overtake you in time,” said Adelaïs, sitting down beside her father, as Dora went away slowly ; she was glad to see Colonel Farnham take interest in

the children, for she knew it would be good for both parties, and he was too apt to notice none but Golden Pippin.

Mrs. Roberts was not at home, nor Frances, for whom Dora asked ; she heard from the servant that all were well, and left a card, and wrote her address in pencil.

Batting worried her with chatter, about who had married and who had left, who had taken somebody's shop, and whose daughter had gone away, and whose had turned out badly ; she longed for quiet, but, as usual, had to give up and listen to Batting's stories of the neighbourhood which she had picked up during her purchase of the children's dinner ; and by the time all had been told the parties joined, and the carriage came out of the hotel yard, so all quiet thoughts were out of the question, for the girls talked all the way to Killerby.

On the road they passed Dr. Morton, and Dora bowed to him, and Colonel Farnham asked,—

“ Who did you say that was ? ”

“ Doctor Morton.”

Melville saw him lean forward to ask the

question, and he saw Dora's lips move in reply, and it gave him a pang too bitter for endurance ; so he struck into the country towards a mountain road, and walked with energy for long enough ; as if that would subdue his misery.

Dora had seen him again ; but she could not define whether she felt pain or pleasure, yet she reasoned that it must be pleasure, for he might come to Enwarry, and she *hoped* he would. Golden Pippin more than once spoke of "that gentleman," and told her papa that he had said he was not "the wolf."

Dora lost heart again when a fortnight passed and he did not come ; she tortured herself that he did not care for her after her long absence, she had grown older, and he must forget her ;—and he asked himself what right had he to go to Enwarry ? and reasoned within himself that a moth was safer never to go within the power of the lamp ; another week, and Dora *reasoned* too, that he could hardly be expected to come.

Mrs. Roberts returned her visit, and unfor-

tunately on the only day she went from home ; but Miss Greystones persuaded her to go to Naghan about some Cashmere dresses and stockings, or something she averred the children ought to have.

Just before November began, and she expected to have to remove the family somewhere for the winter, Colonel Farnham came, and put a letter into her hand to read :—

“ Mr. Enwarry and Lady Michella Enwarry beg to apprise Colonel Farnham, that their plans of returning to Ireland have been frustrated ; and if it suits his convenience to remain in their house until February it is quite at his service, on such terms as Colonel Farnham shall propose. Address to Messrs. Gore, Upper Carrick Street, Dublin, &c., &c.”

“ What do you say, Miss Handon ? ”

“ It is for you to decide.”

“ Then I will write at once to the agents, and keep it, on any terms ; it will be better than removing, and it suits me admirably,

being so near Naghan ; and I think the cold will not be too great for the children."

"Coal and turf will obviate that," said Dora.

"I am glad you agree to keep this place, and Hector will like it for his holidays. I can have him a good deal with me, also."

Something very like despair was closing round Dora with the days, each shorter than the last, and her little glimmer of hope grew less and less, and had become very feeble indeed, till Golden Pippin revived it by falling sick. Not with a tangible complaint, not an infantine malady that could be taken hold of, and thrust aside, only she got a little weaker daily, and there was a something which frightened her father, when Dora sent for him, and described her case.

"I do not like our doctor," said he, "nor any I have met in Naghan. I wonder if there is any one to be had whose opinion is worth having ; by the way, Lady Browning mentioned Doctor Morton of Warringdale, he is very highly spoken of in Dublin, and as you

knew him before, there will be no difficulty. I will send for him instead of Holding."

And he wrote at once, begging Dr. Morton to come and see his child.

He came that evening, and Golden Pippin recognised him and smiled, saying,—

"You have come to Enwarry after all ; why did you not come sooner ?"

"I was not asked to come sooner."

"Oh yes, you were ; I asked you, and then I looked at Aunt Dora, and she did not say no."

Dora steeled herself not to blush, and the little patient was put under examination, but she continued,—

"I told you that day in the wood to come and see my flowers ; it is a pity you did not come ; the apples are gone that looked so nice on the trees, and my flowers are all dead ; why did you come too late ?"

There was something thrilling in her "too late." Colonel Farnham feared it might be too late with regard to her. Melville and Dora had applied the "too late" to themselves and each other, and uneasiness pervaded the whole party.

The doctor broke up the painful *séance* as soon as he could, and put back Colonel Farnham's proffered fee, saying, "Not to-night ; let me see her a few times, before I can pronounce upon her case ; she is a very singular child."

"Are you uneasy ? tell me truly."

"There is no actually dangerous symptom, but I will watch her carefully, and tell you truly as I find her to be." The gentlemen shook hands, and Colonel Farnham said, after seeing the doctor away,—

"I like Doctor Morton very much, and am glad we sent for him."

Dora looked ill and haggard ; it was clear to her mind that Melville did not care for her.

Poor blind Dora.

He came again and again, suffering anguish to subdue all appearance of his love ; and yet, when his visit was over, he could hardly tear himself away from Dora, that lonely Dora, and the infatuating child, Golden Pippin.

Her little mind grew quicker as her body failed ; and it soon became the doctor's painful duty to tell Colonel Farnham that he dared not hope for long life for his little daughter.

Nor did he believe that medical aid could avail or alleviate, but he begged he would consult any other in the profession, both for his own sake, and that of relatives, and so forth.

They had able physicians from Dublin, and they talked of warm climates, but none recommended moving the child ; nor would any put a period or give a name to her illness, if such it could be called ; finally, all agreed that in the hands of Doctor Morton she was very safe, for he had an acknowledged fame and skilfulness, and to him the case was left ; and he promised to come daily to Enwarry from henceforth.

“You are wearing yourself to death, Miss Dora,” said Eliza Batting ; “you look as ill as you did after the fever time at Croydon.”

“I am quite well, thank you, Batting.”

“Now, Doctor Morton, have the goodness to feel her pulse ; she is as weak as Miss Margaret, and yet will take nothing I ask her, and always says she is quite well ; and look at her.”

Dora's hand gave no sign of intention to permit him to feel her pulse. She stood the

fire of his falcon eyes, too, as they glanced into hers, without wincing.

He said nothing, but he had learned that she was not happy, and it was something to be able to pity her. He sat beside Golden Pippin's bed, and Batting left the room. Dora stood beside him; she looked ill and worn, and her fingers were thinner and bluer than they should be.

"The sun shines to-day," began the child; "you ought to take Aunt Dora out."

"I think it would do her good."

"Not to go alone; that does her harm," said the child.

"Does it? how?" said Dora.

"Because aunt is sad alone; I have seen her sad."

"Not often, Golden Pippin."

"Yes, very often; and when I was little I remember Tatua looked like you when Manitutu went away, and when he died Tatua had large eyes like you, Aunt Dora, and was very sad."

"Can she remember New Zealand?" asked the doctor of Dora.

"I do, quite well," the child replied; "I know mamma died there, and I remember many things. Have you been there?"

"No, but I am going in the spring. My family went there a year ago, and I am to join them."

"I am very sorry," said Golden Pippin.

"Why?"

"If I live, I shall want you here; and if I die, Aunt Dora will be lonely."

It was so true, that no one spoke. Had Melville only dared to say one word, all would have been well; but every day he grew more humble about himself, and every day his idol grew more unattainable in his eyes.

Colonel Farnham came oftener, and now and then sat to talk with the doctor; and Dora marked the consideration with which he treated him. He said one day,—

"It is a strange infatuation, Miss Handon, on the part of Doctor Morton, to leave the country as he is about to do; his brother is dead, and he has no right to sacrifice himself for those who are gone to New Zealand; it is

an absurd waste of conscientiousness and money."

"He said he was poor, papa."

"Yes, my Pippin ; but he has the right to a good property, only he chooses to give it to those whose claim is unjust."

Hector was at home at Christmas, and they wreathed holly across the top of Golden Pippin's bed, where she could see it, and flowers were daily brought in from the conservatory for her to look at and fondle. Hector and the sisters sat in her room when they liked, and the doctor would even play a little quiet game with Charles, who was never unruly there. Everybody felt a sort of awe of Golden Pippin, fondly as they loved her.

Hector was a good-hearted boy, and as he was a great deal with his father at Naghan, no gloom was cast upon his Yule-tide by Margaret's illness, nor were his holidays saddened by the knowledge that she was slowly dying ; her little fragile form did not give her brother an idea of death, and only the initiated, detected that her extreme beauty, augmented in her sickness, was not of this world.

CHAPTER VI.

FADING.

CAPTAIN HENGHAM and his wife called often upon Dora, and civilities were offered by many of the county families, but she could not leave home now, and saw few visitors, except Mrs. Roberts, who came several times to see her.


Warna and Adelaïs were tall handsome girls, and got on apace with their studies, and Colonel Farnham congratulated Miss Greystones upon their appearance and attainments, and she deserved praise, for she bestowed great assiduity upon them.

Adelaïs was beautiful, even more so than her elder sister, who had likewise trouble to keep in advance as regarded mental attainments; but Warna managed it, and was becoming a fine and solid character.

Everyone was sorry and astonished when Colonel Farnham was to take leave with Hector, saying he was going to Pau for the rest of the winter on sick leave.

Batting was highly indignant and incensed beyond measure—many times Dora had disliked the way in which she spoke of her brother-in-law, nor would she listen in this instance to the views which Batting took of his sick leave. If she wondered at all at his going, it was only how he could make up his mind to leave Golden Pippin, when there seemed so little chance of her existing when his leave expired. But she knew he had such unlimited confidence in Doctor Morton's treatment, and was so sure that the child would be cared for by herself and the servants, that she made no remark to him, but shook hands in the usual somewhat constrained way, wishing to ask if he had consulted Doctor Morton, but before the words broke forth assured herself that in all probability he had; so she turned to her daily avocations and tried hard to see that all was for the best; and watching the calm face of the little girl, she said to herself,

“There will be time enough for tears when she is no longer with me, I will tend her with jealous love till her short journey on earth is over—but when she goes, then I dread the future indeed.” And the same night, after George Farnham left, Dora having seen the watch set for the night, retired to her room for her due portion of rest; but, instead of making the most of her time by going to bed, she sat in a listless attitude for a long period. As cold as clay she became, and with a grief-stricken, helpless look, that would have rent the heart of a beholder. Poor Dora, cradling her fond love, resolute to hide the same, striving to still rebellious hopes, till at last she moved in agony from side to side, wrung her hands as a black future hung before her, and recalled tones and looks, and words that rung in her ears, but in which she could trace no sign of love. So sternly schooled were those two hearts—till Dora gave up to despair, and so gladly would she have changed places with the fair little patient, that she envied her in dying, and on her he could look with a fair and open brow, and he leaned over her so



tenderly, and so quickly and gladly returned her smile, that dear little Golden Pippin ! yes, Dora envied her that peaceful death-bed, till a burning pain filled her heart, and reproaches would not be stifled from her conscience, that she had no power to quench this unrequited love ; and at last she grew softened, and big tears like rain fell down her face ; and then grown calmer, she lay down and dreamed that he was all her own, and life was happiness and no dread was over her of the time to come, and the dire presentiment of evil was at rest. She slept, and dreamed, and was awakened, all too soon to find it was but a dream, and that the reality was as bad as ever, and that Batting was weary, and it was time to change places with her.

CHAPTER VII.

DR. MORTON.

WEARILY the days passed till a whole month was gone since Colonel Farnham left, and Golden Pippin was rather better than worse, and Dora yielded to the advice of Miss Greystones, and drove out sometimes in a close carriage to return some visits.

Mrs. Hengham told her she was doing too much sick duty, and advised her not to pay such arduous attention to a child who could not recover, and for whom she appeared to be sacrificing her own life.

Mrs. Roberts gave no advice, but she kept Dora for luncheon, and made an hour or two pass pleasantly, and interested her guest about her family and the affairs of Warringdale. Frances had nearly lost all trace of lameness,

and mother and daughter spoke of Doctor Morton with affection and gratitude.

Mr. Horne was gone long ago, and had a nice wife and an incumbency far away. The vicar was at this moment doing all the duty, but his curate was to return after Trinity, and just as Dora asked his name Frances retired.

"The fact is," said Mrs. Roberts, "he is to have my Frances in a year or two, and is now absent with our good vicar's consent, to see his father who is at Nice, and dying; it is not a subject to rejoice about, Miss Handon, but Mr. Everard will come in for a nice property, and I am very glad that Frances has so happy a lot in store for her. How shall you manage, by the way, when Doctor Morton leaves? his time is getting short now."

"He has not said anything lately about going."

"Nevertheless he is going, and soon, to his family in New Zealand," said Mrs. Roberts.

"So he told us some time ago, and little Margaret almost envies him, she remembers some Maori people who made a great impression upon her."

"Poor little thing; I hope he will leave her better."

Dora shook her head. It was a comfort to be able to look miserable about her darling; but Mrs. Roberts would go on,—

"I cannot tell you, Miss Handon, how much Mr. Roberts and I lament this mistaken decision of Doctor Morton; but he is very proud, and I believe, acts under what he believes to be his duty, but it is such a pity to let that property go to a scrapegrace."

"I do not know any of his family affairs," said Dora in an icy tone.

"No, I dare say not; he seldom speaks of his family, but his late elder brother was a reprobate character, and Melville chooses to acknowledge some sons who were never heard of till after his death, when we thought our friend would be in possession of some comfortable thousands annually. A very large sum fell to Melville's share some time ago, from the will of a relation, but which he allowed his elder brother to fool away, and finds after his death that signatures were not affixed to render him able to claim his rights—he said

his profession yielded enough for his wants, and he would not go to law with his brother in time to save his fortune. Since his brother's death he has continued the education of those children, whose mother by the way stipulated that New Zealand must be their locale. Melville has effected the sale of the estate, established his elder nephew at college, where he is doing pretty well, and a small inheritance is secured to him—plenty if he keeps steady and does not follow in his father's vicious courses. It is so tied that he cannot easily harm his prospects, and Melville persists in going out to set his enterprise for the other sons afloat. I think there are sisters too, as well as the mother, who must be a clever woman, though it is a pity she ever lived. Doctor Morton is the noblest creature I ever met with."

Dora made no comment, but rose shortly and took leave. She had never doubted that he had a noble heart. She only longed to share his poverty and cares; any anxiety would be welcome to her, if partaken of with him.

His daily visit was over when she got back to Enwarry, and the next day she had to make

a rush into Naghan by one train, and home by the next, but she reached home just as he was gone ; it was provoking to have missed him for two days.

Misunderstandings of course followed. Dr. Morton thought "She avoids me, and wishes to spare me the pain of a refusal ;" and Dora sorrowed, and determined to prove how sorry she was the next day. He came. Margaret talked incessantly, and told him a great many things that the others had quite forgotten ; her brain was preternaturally active, and memory, as in such cases, peculiarly retentive. Dora brought in her explanation of her absence on the two previous days.

"You will be going soon ?" said the child.

"Yes, very soon. Who told you ?"

"You told us when you first came here."

"So I did."

"Aunt Dora and I shall miss you sadly."

"And I shall miss you."

"What a pity you are going. Do not go—try to stay with us," urged the child ; and whilst they were speaking some one called Dora away, and a letter from Miss Fanny was placed in

her hand, saying that her aged brother was disconsolate at the idea of losing Golden Pippin; only lately they had dared to tell him, that he had written to George Farnham for his consent, and obtained it; and now it was for her to do him the only pleasure he craved, which was to bring the child to Claydon Eaves if possible, if only indeed for the worst to be there, and they must come at once, for her brother was weaker and much shaken in constitution, and so impatient that he could not rest till he should see the little one.

Dora went back to the room at once, and calling Doctor Morton to the window, explained the purport of the letter to him. Gently as they spoke, Golden Pippin heard, and said,

“ Oh yes, let us go to Claydon Eaves; we can bear it better there than anywhere.”

“ Bear what ? ”

“ His going away; let us start at once, Aunt Dora.”

“ If it is done at all, it must be done at once,” said the doctor, “ and I will see you as far as Manchester.”

"Can you?" asked Dora. "Have you time?"

"That will be on my way. As to time, it is up. I ought to be in London now."

So Miss Greystones and the others were left at Enwarry, and the steam-packet from Killerby bore away for ever, Doctor Morton and Golden Pippin. Dora knew that it would be so, and that if she had to return, it would be *alone* indeed.

Batting held the small form on her knee during the greater part of the journey; the passage was rough, for the equinoctial gales had begun early, but it all seemed nothing to Dora, so engrossed were her thoughts, and so determined was she to bear up.

Melville Morton gave up his only chance of a day in London. He could not, as a careful physician, lose sight of his charge till they arrived at Claydon Eaves; his luggage was left at Manchester, but he could not tear himself away—it was something to put off that farewell.

He looked like a soldier after the fight, worn and wearied. Dora had grown old upon the journey, and was haggard and thin. They reached Claydon Eaves, and he did not heed Miss Fanny's hospitable entreaties; after Golden Pippin had been carried into the great hall and Dora had slowly followed him, then he said, truly and firmly,—

“I cannot stay, I have delayed too long already. I must take leave of my little patient at once, if you please.”

Miss Fanny would not be pacified—he should not go till next day; but he must be resolute.

“I must go; let me say farewell.”

He saw the child on a sofa in a large old library, and a handsome old gentleman beside her. Melville took her tiny hand from his, saying,

“You are with grandpapa now, and so good bye,” and he stooped and kissed the little face which was radiant with happiness as she said,

“We can bear it better here, but I wish you could stay too.”

Tears glistened in his eyes, and he turned at the door to take a last look at Golden

Pippin, whose eyes were fondly following him.

Dora was in the hall, still in her bonnet and travelling cloak.

“How am I to thank you?” she began.

“Do not.”

He followed her to the great empty dining room, but she would not speak. He thought she might wish to ask some question about the child, so gave her gravely a few directions.

Dora trembled, and her quivering lip tried to form words.

Melville for one moment stood irresolute, then snatched her hand and kissed it.

“I must go—there is no time. Dare I hope if I can get back in a year, or two?”

Dora had no power to speak. It was true the time was gone—Melville would miss the train. She led him towards the door, and there she raised her face, and her lips touched his for one brief moment, and he was gone.

Gone, blind fool! with the old torture, that she did not care for him—that she had kissed him as a sister might a brother, in pure sorrow

that he was going away for ever. Blind infatuation, that he could not read her agonizing love !

Miss Fanny spoke highly in favour of Dr. Morton. She heard from Batting how he risked so much to see little Margaret safely at Claydon Eaves, and in a day or two the pain of parting diminished, the child herself prattled about him and New Zealand, and Miss Fanny and her brother flattered themselves that the change had done her good.

Every arrangement about sailing had been done by letter, and by strangers, as Dr. Morton could not bear to lessen the moments with Dora, and he had only hours in London where days were wanted to complete his plans. All was hurry and confusion at the last, but the last moment came, and the "Mary Adelaide" was to sail to the moment, so he had to hasten on board, and she did set sail as expected, bearing her freight proudly, and in a few hours was ploughing the briny ocean with her cargo of souls, and hearts breaking or hoping—it was all one to the good ship and her crew.

Dora saw the departure of the "Mary Adelaide" in the papers, and wrestled with her agony, and kept it below the surface, whilst Melville saw the shores of Old England recede from his view with a feeling more akin to helpless despair than should have gained a place in a mind where Philosophy had long believed she triumphed. And when the grandfather and great aunt had grown cheerful about the little girl, and Dora had time to correspond minutely with Miss Greystones about the other girls, her hollow eyes and thin hands struck every one: surely something was wrong, or Miss Handon would not look so ill. But even Batting did not find out how she suffered; it never entered her head that her mistress could throw away her heart, as she would call it, upon a poor ruined man like Dr. Morton. And he had been so grave and distant, with all his tenderness towards Golden Pippin, that she had never discovered his secret. And so the fond hearts were parted without hope, or it must be a very faint one, of ever meeting in future days.

CHAPTER VIII.

PARTING.

MEANWHILE Colonel Farnham continued to spend his days on the Continent, and to derive amusement in various places ; lastly he wrote that he should remain at home till after Easter. Miss Greystones, Warna, Adelaïs, and Charles, were yet at Enwarry ; Lady Michella had found out that she did not care to return, and her indulgent husband, much as he loved Ireland, loved his wife better, and gave his tenant option to remain till their return.

The spring advanced with perfect beauty ; it was a season of enjoyment, the blossoms were more abundant than ever, and the girls watched the gardener's arrangements with a latent hope that they might yet see the fruit,

for no period seemed to threaten their stay in this enchanting spot.

The long nights at Claydon Eaves became short ones, or were succeeded by those no longer dark and dreary, and Dora, sleepless for hours herself, delighted in having the child to watch, and all the night, at intervals, would visit her room and pace her own by turns.

At last she had no excuse to wander along the corridor, and had not the relief of standing by the wide staircase window to gaze out upon the silent night, or watch the earliest dawn break over the vast extent of country to be seen beyond the fine park and splendid timber; quite unregarded she had formed this habit, and it became a sort of natural indulgence to look at the green tints and the fresh beauty of nature, after leaving the bedside of the drooping child.

The longest day passed, a glorious time followed—a summer, people said, without parallel in England—everything verdant and bright; showers refreshed the earth, and all things without, looked as if Nature held a

jubilee. July was hot, but of a bearable heat, too, with delicious breezes waving the foliage and standing crops. July was half over before Golden Pippin died ; her life was gone—that little life was all as a dream, and they laid her with much of stately ceremony beside her grandmother. Dora then sought to leave this place of parting ; it seemed impossible to stay even a night after the family vault closed over her little charge, and they thought her impatience to go back to Ireland was so natural that Miss Fanny only pleaded for one week of quiet rest—a week of purgatory to Dora ; they deemed her faded looks only a tribute to the love she bore to Golden Pippin, and truly her life had been bound up with that little child's, and her heart seemed all but dead, over this *second* parting.

Miss Greystones was shocked with her appearance, and yet she had long ago guessed how matters stood, and was the more convinced when Dora came home looking as if the grave yawned for her also ; but a few days gave her yet further insight, and then she saw the truth of the adage, that grief does not


kill, or at any rate Dora's was not the grief that is over, with a brief sickness and then death; it was one that she would hide and bear for years.

No word passed between them, but Dora knew that she was understood, and she knew, too, that her secret was safe; but she almost shunned Miss Greystones with a jealousy and torture which such a mind and love as hers must produce, till the gentle ways and quiet sympathy did her good, and she felt she had a friend.

The house was dismal now, despite the summer weather; a gloom had settled on the roof tree, and nothing occurred to dispel it.

Hector's midsummer vacation had been spent in France, where some friends of his father entertained him, and he did not see his sisters.

Colonel Farnham got extension of leave, and Batting told Dora some facts which caused anxiety; but few particulars of his movements were known, and she tried to cast aside the dread of overhanging sorrow which pervaded her.



Slowly the days went by ; Dora grew less and less inclined for the company of strangers, and Enwarry was fast lapsing into as quiet and sober an establishment as Hilda Villa, Croydon, had been.

Thus autumn advanced and passed, and Dora did not try to rouse from a lethargy of grief, which was wrapped around her like a web.

It was mid-winter again, and they were still at Enwarry when she entered the breakfast-parlour one morning, after the meal was over, and found Miss Greystones and Batting in earnest conversation ; the latter, as soon as she perceived her mistress, rushed from the apartment with a flushed and angry face.

“What is the matter ?” asked Dora.

Miss Greystones handed her the *Times*, pointing to

“ELOPEMENT IN HIGH LIFE.—We have to announce, with much pain, a distressing and singular case which occurred at Rome ; the more singular since the gallant gentleman is a member of the Established Church, and has a numerous family, whilst the lady is a Roman Catholic.”

More followed, and their journey and arrangements, given for the diversion of those who greedily read the story of a downfall such as this.

Dora saw Miss Greystones was distressed, and said,

"But, surely, this is not relating to us?—we have no right to suspect anything wrong. Why apply it to anyone we know? Let us hope for the best."

"There is no hope, and no doubt," said Miss Greystones; "the servants have received the news from a valet of Mr. Enwarry's, whose grief borders on distraction. Poor man! they say he is the kindest master and best of friends."

Dora sat down to consider her affliction.

"Is it possible that my sister's husband, Ethel's George—the father of these girls and of Golden Pippin, can have so committed himself? We must leave this place—there seems contamination in the very walls. Let us go. I can yet scarcely believe it."

Miss Greystones was in tears, she felt for Dora and for her pupils, but shame for the base facts wrung her heart. Dora forgot her

own sorrow in this new calamity, and said, resolutely,

“We must go, and to-day, Miss Greystones; the girls shall not stay in her house.”

“And where must we go?”

“Oh, anywhere, even to Warringdale; I will send Batting to take any house she finds empty, and by-and-by we can see, and think what to do.”

“Warringdale is too near, Miss Handon.”

“So it is, and our rushing there would only confirm the scandal; let us leave this before it becomes generally known. Warringdale would not do.” As Dora said this she thought of Mrs. Roberts, and how she would question her—of Dr. Morton and their first meeting, and of their farewell and the weary months since, and a groan escaped her as the desolate recollections passed in miserable review before her.

“Shall we try Dublin?” she asked, meekly.

“I fear Lady Michella may be spoken of there too much,” said Miss Greystones.

“We cannot hide ourselves or the children from the wretched man,” said Dora; “where shall we go—what ought we to do?”

“It is for you to advise.”

“I will risk all; I cannot give up Ethel’s children. We will go to Paris; no one will notice us there—at any rate, no one we know; it will be good for the girls, so we will go there at once.”

And quicker than it might seem possible they vacated Enwarry Lodge.

Claydon Eaves suggested itself to Dora, but she could not go there, and to take the girls there would be to let them breathe an atmosphere of woe; the old man must be so shocked. She could not go there nor part with the girls; so she wrote to old Mr. Farnham a few words of farewell from all, casting no reproach upon George Farnham, or making comment upon Lady Michella; she only said she had taken it upon herself to remove her sister’s girls from Ireland, and hoped to reach Paris shortly; bidding him and Miss Fanny a kind farewell.

CHAPTER IX.

CAST AWAY.

THOUGH Dora had felt inclined to sink under her weight of sorrow when Melville Morton left her, she was almost thankful to be free for the present emergency, and was in the utmost haste to take Warna and Adelaïs from the house of the woman who had so deeply wronged them, and had cast a stigma on their names.

“Ethel’s husband !” she would repeat to herself till she almost feared she was beginning to hate him, and Lady Michella she did hate, with a deadly hatred, and thought it no sin, but only womanly to do so.

The scandal was blazed forth in Naghan in a few hours ; some wondered at one, some at the other, some even said they always expected

it, though, of course, nobody could learn why ; some called Colonel Farnham a fool, and others Lady Michella ; but all agreed in feeling sorry for her husband, and in a few days came a report that Mr. Enwarry was at the point of death. Then came excitement in the form of a whisper from one gossip to another, that somebody had been told he died by his own hand ; next followed the contradiction, and then delusive stories, full of interest, became so numerous that people grew wary, and finally believed nothing, and in nine days the wonder had subsided, and Colonel Farnham and Lady Michella were free to travel any way they chose, and the husband to live or die without further comment expressed in his behalf than a wonder whether he would not try to divorce his wife first.

The neighbourhood of Enwarry cast scorn upon the affair. Lord Andrin was also abroad, and the relatives of Lady Michella allowed indignation to take the place of affection, and rejected the sympathy which officious friends offered, and left her to follow her own devices ; and as scandal, like fire, requires to be fed, or

we see little progress, so by her friends' silence Lady Michella was soon forgotten, cast aside as soon as the newspapers were torn up.

Lost to her relations and the world, of course, she was left to find consolation in her friend Colonel Farnham, and her very comfortable religion.

Enwarry Lodge was left in charge of some faithful people belonging to its master, and looked deserted enough after Dora was gone ; the lights no longer gleamed from the windows, nor did the smoke curl or rise from every chimney ; a ghostly, desolate appearance seized it, and everybody shunned the abode.

In this state it was, when one day its owner arrived, sick unto death ; so changed that the old retainer did not recognise the master who came to his own gates, so worn, so pitiful an object as he was ; dying it was clear, and dying, if ever man did, of a broken heart.

Poor deserted husband, and lonely man ! The blow had come down upon him suddenly, no suspicion had ever tarnished his love and confidence in her who was all he cared for in life ;

his cherished, his fondly indulged and adored wife deserted him ; he could not bear the disgrace, and sorrow ate deep rifts into his constitution, so he crawled home to die, his only satisfaction to die where she had loved him, and been innocent and good.

A foreign servant attended him—he would suffer none to be with him else. All servants were dismissed but one old man, his wife and daughter, who could be trusted, and they made no revelations. Visitors were forbidden to see the pleasure grounds, which grew wild and neglected very soon ; no one knew that Mr. Enwarry was at home but his few chosen servants.

Medical aid would have been vain, and none was sought ; consumption of the most rapid nature made ravages in his fine face and manly frame, and he rather courted the end than sought to avert it.

CHAPTER X.

PARIS.

DORA was soon settled in Paris, and found, as she expected, that their comings and goings in that fine metropolis were unnoticed, amidst the varied sources of amusement and diversion. A suitable apartment was not difficult to find, and Miss Greystones and her tall pupils were pleased with the variety Paris afforded.

No sooner, however, did Dora begin to breathe freely after the excitement, than her former guardian, Major Talbot, turned up. She had only casually heard of his existence two or three times since she left Warringdale to go to Lady Meath, and the accounts were never to his credit.

Now he was no longer afraid of George Farnham, who had been his bitter enemy, for

he had insisted in a very forcible manner upon the restitution of certain moneys in right of his wife, and as much as he could get out of the clutches of Major Talbot had been safely placed in the hands of trustees for his girls.

Hector would have Claydon Eaves after him, and his education was steadily advancing, and Charles would have an income suitable to a younger son, and ample means to set him forth in a profession ; the two girls, since the death of Margaret, were to share her portion between them, and bad as George Farnham was in his passion for Lady Michella, he loved his children, and fretted over the loss of Golden Pippin in a manner which would have surprised those who could not but wonder at his absence and subsequent conduct.

This was a blow to his father and Miss Fanny in their old age, but the shock had different effects from what might have been anticipated.

Miss Fanny was much astonished that her brother, instead of sinking under it as she dreaded, raised himself more erect than before,

and in a few days began to talk to her calmly about the future.

“Fanny, it must never be that my son sets a Roman Catholic over the parish of Claydon Eaves.”

“Why, brother, she will not interfere with Mr. Bevan or his curate. Surely our people will be safe under them ; do not fear her.”

“Fanny, I dread her coming, and George is not fit to counteract her influence ; fancy a private chapel here, or Claydon Eaves under the thumb of papacy !”

“I am not afraid about the parish, brother, I am only uneasy about the children.”

“That is another source of anxiety ; but I hope Miss Handon will keep them.”

“How can she, if the father claims them ? They say Mr. Enwarry will not live even to file a bill for dissolution of marriage.”

“Then, Fanny, you think, as his wife, she will claim to have the care of them after awhile ?”

“Brother, she may ; but we must hope for the best. I believe George will have sense enough to keep her abroad ; surely he will

never sully the name by living with her in open shame in England."

"Alas, after such an elopement what can we look for? delicacy is dead with her. I must now pray to God to spare my days, which, till now, I would willingly have closed. I must live, if God permit, and keep the old Hall from contamination ; I can hope only for a few years, but during those the shadow of shame shall not fall upon the graves of Margaret and Golden Pippin."

Miss Fanny looked up at the mention of his wife's name ; it surprised her, but she saw that he was very firm, and seemed to have lost part of the stoop in his back, which had bowed him ever since he became a widower ; but his hair was even whiter, and his features sharper, as if the mental suffering were too much. But he grew stronger day by day, took every means to keep up his health, and went about the estate as formerly ; no tenant or friend was neglected, neither did one of them, or even Mr. Bevan, his most intimate associate near him, speak of his son's doings ; the *éclat*

was soon over, and no fear dwelt at Claydon Eaves about the reckless mistress of days to come.

Miss Fanny wrote to Dora, approving the step she had taken, and saying she had great reliance on her extreme steadiness of character; and as she knew Miss Greystones would remain with the girls and do her duty, she thought the great advantages to be derived in Paris afforded her pleasure to think of, and she considered Dora had judged wisely and well.

Dora was beginning to enjoy a little society, and found herself growing less alive to sorrow and more able to make an effort to spend her time with the girls, when Major Talbot annoyed her by constant visits. Specious as ever, and courteous as he knew how to be when it suited him, he tried to win the hearts of the young ladies; but Dora would not allow any intimacy, and refused his presents to them, and even denied herself, when possible, to prevent his repeating his attentions. He tried hard, next, to ingratiate himself into favour

with Miss Greystones, but his extreme suavity of manner put her at once on her guard, as she immediately knew there must be something to hide; as Mr. Horne of Warringdale had also said.

In fact he was poor again, poor almost to starvation. He had been found out and distrusted in Paris, so far that, when Dora came, he sought, in his own peculiar manner, to enrich himself by her means, but she had grown alert and wary, and would not fall into his snares. All sorts of annoyance assailed her, tradespeople, and hotel-keepers brought her bills for goods he had obtained in her name, and she had to stand the disagreeables of a Procès Verbal in one case before she could induce people to believe that she had nothing in the world to do with Major Talbot.

Angry beyond measure at the publicity thus given to his rascality, he visited Dora yet once again, and she refused to allow Miss Greystones to leave the salon, but sent also for Batting when his persistence to see her alone, became too impertinent; so his last appeal proved fruitless, and all he could obtain was

money enough to leave Paris by the midnight train southwards ; and Batting said Miss Handon was wrong to award him even that much, for he would come again to-morrow. But he did not ; and as many debts and much dishonesty lay at his door, he did as he had formerly done—disguised himself so completely as to elude the vigilance of every one, and boldly travelled away as some one else, whose passport he had managed to become possessed of.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CONVENT PUPIL.

I DO think the days of contrition and shame are over ; the amiable delusion that people are sorry for having done wrong without doubt exists, and should exist, but a greater latitude of conduct is allowed by society than is good for one's morals, and until wrong of all kinds is more set down it will reign. Why do not truly well-meaning persons turn their backs upon evil doers, upon men and women too, whose circumstances and education warrant better things ? But society is lenient, stern reprobation is unpleasant and difficult to carry out. No doubt Christianity with many, prevails ; a kind, simple-hearted unbelief of evil, and a fine manly hoping for the better, an instinctive dread of giving credence to hearsay,

and Heaven defend such from scandal and its disagreeables ; but there is, nevertheless, a glossing over of defects, a wilful blindness to faults, which causes them to increase instead of to diminish ; I am certain men would be better if more afraid of each other's opinion. Of women one can hardly say the same ; it is a well-known fact that the sex is only too prone to cry out 'Infamous ! disgraceful !' and to seize upon ignominious schemes to trample down a fallen sister. Not all ; angels amongst women do exist even upon earth, ready to watch over and win the backslider from her course, and not to the detriment of their own consciences, but to the salvation of those they pick out from the uncongenial, repressing atmosphere which surrounds them.

It is a difficult question what to do with them after, but it does not take from the holiness of those angelic spirits who soothe their tortured minds and nurture all the good which early recollection of home ties and sympathies have still kept alive—those warm affections which the poor sinner indulged, as if by stealth, during her season of—let us call it

oblivion of good. But once reclaimed as far as the world allows, these sentiments revive, and what has she to hope for? There is nothing but repentance and death.

In extreme cases the world is full of scorn, and pitiless and cold; but the matter is so hard to deal with; there must be a line, and where is it to be drawn, if the fallen are to be reinstated—if the tender, pure, loving woman and her young daughters, delicate in feature, spotless in heart, are to associate with women who have sinned and been received again into society? It is impossible; the timid, gentle nature of woman must be changed before such can be; the graces of the girlish character must not expand in unchecked loveliness and purity when such companionship is to be dreaded in after life. Maidens would have to be brought up with more than convent rigour if such dangers were to assail them on entering into life. So wickedness can never be tolerated in good society, can never there become fashionable; nerves must not be outraged or the senses of propriety be annoyed—no, such society at once expels the offender, and she is

forgotten, and if in after years, with cool assurance, she applies for admittance, the door is as quietly closed against her.

Such Lady Michella found to be the case. No penitent did she appear, sorrow found no place in her heart, nor regret for the husband who had spent his days in devising new indulgences and pleasures for his worthless wife; she took her *congé* from society without a pang, for the few, the one rigid circle who do require morality ignored her at once, but she made no trouble of that, the many remained, who she well knew would care very little about her little peccadillos, and she had no fear. The world was not composed of the small, but of the greater number, with whom she would find life just as agreeable in her way as ever.

Michella was the elder daughter of a noble house, as before said. Educated in Ireland, but with abundant foreign assistance, she became one of the most beautiful women in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland; several noble suitors were at her feet, amongst them Lord Middleton, who thanked his stars, a few

years later, that he had not been more importunate, but accepted his first refusal.

During her years at the convent, Lady Michella's extreme beauty wrought even upon the nuns, and it was said that the Father Confessor did not impose upon her the vigils that fell to those young ladies of more plebeian origin, or who had a tendency to a snub nose. Lady Michella made very ample confessions too about her vanities, her hair troubled her, and contrary to rules she wished to let it wave and float upon the air during recreations; weak-minded desires about ribbons disturbed her during matins, and at vespers she was annoyed about an ornament she had been forbidden to wear. The Sisters, who acted governess, thought brooches and bracelets unbecoming a right-minded pupil, and they told her so, leaving it for the priest himself to insinuate that her beauty needed not "foreign aid."

She hated being taught, and alienated herself from her young companions; panted for her liberty, and longed, as she told her confessor, to get married and be free. This was at a very youthful age, and the old man re-

buked her, and even laid a few worldly considerations before her; namely, that in her high condition, young women had to be ever over-circumspect before they committed so terrible a sacrifice as matrimony. The Church was stringent upon such matters, family must be considered, and men in general were painted as desperadoes, ready to pounce upon a girl for the sake of her fortune, while a yet coarser make of human beings would profess warm friendship for a time and then grow cold; it would be better for Lady Michella to attend to her duties of education, and especially of religion, that she might finally hope to found a branch convent, and be a beautiful Reverend Mother in her own loved Ireland. But Lady Michella shocked his feelings by declaring that convent life did not suit her ideas at all, and that sooner than be always under the influence of the church, she would marry a Protestant.

Such a dereliction could not go unpunished, and the most severe penance she had ever had, was inflicted, and her lessons doubled; in fact they sought to repress her rebellion, but Lady

Michella, as time went on, voted the convent a terrible waste of womanly happiness and comfort. Her singing lessons gave intense pleasure after the Italian master told her, in his soft language and poetic words, that she was the loveliest pupil he ever had, and that her voice was a gift from Paradise.

Her Italian advanced as rapidly as did her progress in singing, and probably the same man was an incentive to her industry in that study, for she liked well to converse with her flattering teacher, and the pious nun, who sat near during the lesson, did not distinguish between the reading and the conversation ; it was all lost to her, good woman, who could not see the use of young ladies learning languages she did not understand, but it never entered her well-meaning head that one word of such a tongue could be more dangerous than another ; and Lady Michella sang in Italian, but the nuns sang Latin, and they never thought of love songs, or that the mellifluous words meant anything. In their innocent hearts, Italian was the modern, while Latin was the ancient, Roman language, nothing more.

Time passed, and the young pupil with others of her age left the abode of peace, and the holy priest at confession having feared Lady Michella might think of running away with her singing master, so very evident was her predilection for him, did not fail to give her a little lesson on human wisdom and pride, and to inculcate principles worthy of her ancient lineage; which lesson was continued by her father, till she believed no one worthy of her hand, but did not deny herself the pleasure of a flirtation whensoever she had a chance; and though some said she was as proud as Lucifer and inherited all her family's ideas about the age of her descent, she was in truth as very a coquette as ever existed. Her manners were pleasant and gay; she was self-reliant, and full of energy; she could enchant one man, mortify another, unbend the proud nature of a third, and bring another to her feet in some incomprehensible way; while her dark eyes would flash with triumph as her proud slave showed his devotion. Her father repeatedly warned her that young men could not bear her allurements; she was too beautiful to be so free of

speech as she was, but she only smiled with a brighter smile than usual and said,—

“Do not preach to me, papa; at least, not now, I am not quite in the mood for it.”

“You are driving Lord Middleton and two or three others to despair, Michella, and all at the same time; you have even bewitched young Meath. I wonder you care for young *attachés*.”

“Neither do I, papa; I care for none of their feelings.”

“I believe such is the case.”

“Then do not preach any more, papa.”

“It is a pity to dismiss some of your victims.”

“I could not marry more than one, papa,” she said in her lightest, gayest tone.

“I suspect you will be sorry to be reduced to one.”

“I am in no hurry, papa.”

She did not care for Lord Middleton, nor for two or three others who fondly cared for her; she drove them to the verge of despair, but her own heart was untouched; one Mr. Langley died, and a foreign grave closed over him. He could not resist her influence, and it

broke his heart to find she had none, so he said.

The proud syren sang, and a swarm of idlers hovered about her in town. Three seasons passed, and she made no selection. Every one said, "It is the religion that prevents her marrying," for men were willing that she should follow her own creed, so that they might only possess so beautiful a creature, and the world gave her credit for consistency, and thought she refused, on account of her Roman Catholic education, to marry a Protestant; and somehow, amongst her admirers, there were fewer Roman Catholics than others. At last, she learnt to love the man with all the fire of her strong nature, and he, firmly believing in her, was punished fearfully for giving way to his passion for her beauty and voice.

Geoffrey Enwarry was implored by his friends to beware in time, but he could not resist; his fate was sealed, he yielded to Lady Michella's angelic strains, and promising his father that he would rigidly adhere to the faith of his ancestors, stood beside Michella at the different altars which united them,

within a few weeks of his first introduction to her.

He was the only son of Sir Walter Enwarry, whose wife expired at his birth, and he had watched him as the pride of his youth and hope of his age. Cherished for the sake of the young wife, the father lavished affection on the boy, and all things conspired to render him contented ; but he could not resist Lady Michella, and told his father, when he accorded what the son called his tardy consent, that he married his first love.

Now Sir Walter had broad lands and money in plenty, properties in all the three kingdoms, so there would be no lack of gold in the case though Lady Michella's fortune was small when compared with her husband's ; but things for once went so smoothly that even settlements were no excuse for delay, and lawyers do sometimes interfere with the rapid course of true love.

True love this time did run smoothly, and promised so to do for many years to come. Who could live in such a state of enchantment as did Geoffrey ? no sacrifice would have been

too great for him to make for his beautiful wife. Even Sir Walter could not wonder at his son's stings and arrows proving incurable; love never shot more deeply his darts than in this case. People said it was quite refreshing to see a regular old-fashioned love-match; the old recollected such a case, and talked with glee of days gone by; the young believed poetic effusions had foundation. Geoffrey Enwarry and his love-match were envied by some and laughed at by those who could hardly believe in sentiments so pure; "sour grapes," probably: though I have lately heard a new version of the old fable, and resignation and self-denial assigned to the fox.

We have seen Geoffrey's confidence abused, and his life's hope and happiness dashed to the ground by the heartless woman he loved; and yet she loved him with all the depth her soul was capable of but a short time before, and would have discredited the fact if laid before her that she was soon to change. So little stability had her heart, that she left Geoffrey, whose adoration for her blinded him to the

waning of her affection ; indeed there was no change in her words or ways to him, nothing visible at any rate, or the lover-like husband must have detected it. Who so jealous as a lover ? Unsuspecting Geoffrey heaped favours upon the man she dared to love, and for whom she spread forth her dangerous allurements. She must have erred very far before George Farnham dared acknowledge her affection.

We live in times of change, and of sudden change too. Mr. Froude said, in his lecture at the Royal Institution,—“The temper of each generation is a continual surprise. The Fates delight to contradict our most confident expectations. The most reasonable anticipations fail us ; antecedents the most apposite mislead us, because the conditions of human problems never repeat themselves. None can say what will come after us. What opinions, what convictions, the infant of to-day will find prevailing on the earth, if he and it live out together to the middle of another century, only a very bold man would undertake to conjecture.” So says Mr. Froude ; and his ideas are coming true, for does it not surprise one that Lady

Michella evinced no contrition for her own rash folly, nor no aching sorrow for the deserted Geoffrey? One can believe in a moment of unreflecting haste, passion predominating, and a step taken which cannot be retraced, but one imagines it followed by a hidden life of repentance, and dire contempt of the fallen self. Lady Michella made no retreat; her out-door exercises and in-door amusements were the same, only her companion was changed. She was a trifle more upright, a little bolder in her bearing in public places, but she shunned no one; if some weak persons did not dare to acknowledge her presence, it was all one to her, she did not perceive them. Expediency, without doubt, became her rule; quick by nature and alive to conventionalities, yet her supreme selfishness carried her through some difficult passes, and there was no obvious alteration in Lady Michella.

She declared she was more pleased to remain on the continent; and no new opera came out, no celebrated singer was announced, but her ladyship was among the first to listen to the strains. Music was her one amuse-

ment, and she appreciated talent in a high degree.

Her religion too, for hitherto she had been devout in outward form, if not in inward purity, was better cared for on the continent. The Irish priests and chapels did not satisfy her refined taste; she wanted the music of Mozart or Cherubini; her senses were not appeased with the fervour of even a bishop in Ireland, when the concomitants were wanting, namely, the choir and the grandeur of foreign worship, which seems to change conventional gloom into a splendid pageant. Religion must be scientific, like other things, to keep pace with man's requirements, and the Church of Rome knows this; ascetic devotion requires aid, the aid is firm faith that works will prevail. Religion of people in the world, like Lady Michella, must be kept up by the eye and the ear, or the heart becomes dead, so say the priests.

Rome, Naples, Florence, Genoa, towns intermediate or surrounding, were visited by Colonel Farnham and Lady Michella; if letters reached them they were unheeded. Whereso-

ever a fashionable crowd assembled, they were amongst them. Not as formerly within the inner circle ; no, it was too rigid, but under the outer belts. Within the boundary still Lady Michella managed to find a place, and people asked themselves, "How is this? Is her husband dead, or is Colonel Farnham only his friend?" They liked to flatter themselves into believing there could be no harm in her.

Dazzled by her beauty, and led on beyond control by her dangerous intimacy, George Farnham betrayed weakness which appalled himself. She might enjoy the opera and listen to the prima donna with attention ; he could not, his mind was in convulsion, his body fevered and full of misery ; he dared not return to England to be a bye-word and a scorn to all his old associates. He had wearied of life before, but to himself his present condition appeared incredible, his grey hairs disgraced ; he could not foretell what a week would do, for in spite of his beautiful friend he was sick of his days, and time sped with him on leaden wings. She had her music, and musical people, who asked no questions, but enjoyed her thrilling

voice, and gloried in the difficult parts she could take in operatic music. No thought of absent Geoffrey troubled her ; and shortly the thought came with agony to Colonel Farnham, that this woman was unfit to guide his daughters, a new idea stirring up his inmost gloom.

For hours he would suffer acutely ; discomforting thoughts occupied his mind whenever Lady Michella was not present, and the never ending question, "What am I to do with her?" become torture. That he, with his kind heart, could have been so befooled, full of strength intellectually and bodily, for he came of a good old English race, bold and favoured by nature, hardy and well featured, a family well up to the hounds for centuries, and yet good university students, not mere sportsmen. That he, the husband of Ethel whom he had so loved, could become her children's scorn was terrible.

Whatever Lady Michella received of consolation in her religion, his could give him none ; he had turned counter to all its dictates, and found himself fast running towards unfaith ; he tried to stifle conscience, to believe in no

law but the law of expediency, and groaned as he said it was all his fate, and he must make the best of it.

Lady Michella bore herself proudly, purchased respect from those beneath her by her generosity; and when many of the rigorous shook their fingers at her privately, they acknowledged that she was so beautiful that they were weak enough to hope she had not gone astray, as others said; there must have been urgent reasons for her conduct, they contended, and they hardly had patience with others who said, *sotto voce*, "She is not good."

Uncomfortable days succeeded each other, till George Farnham found a sort of stolid repose; before that, with a mental struggle, he had given up his children, resolved never to see them again rather than to endanger them by contact with Lady Michella. She was all his own, and he must abide by his lot. He read dangerous books, listened to the tempter who tried to banish from his mind the creed which had formerly been his support and comfort; and finally Lady Michella hoped he would

renounce it, and give her the glory of bringing him over to the Papal claims.

No. There was no fear of that ; he could not bear the thralldom of the Church of Rome ; faith was wanting to receive such solace. He was alive to such absurdities as that the Pope himself could absolve him from the past, or that he could make reparation to his children ; he was in another frame of equal danger ; all faith was under an eclipse with him.

“The time will come,” says Lichtenberg, “when the belief in God will be as a tale with which old women frighten children ; when the world will be a machine, the ether a gas, and God will be a FORCE !”

Such views had come to George, or so he tried to persuade himself, and a sort of indifference to past, present, or future, supplanted all that had filled his breast before.

CHAPTER XII.

LADY EVELYN.

LORD ANDINGDRON gave very decorous dinner-parties during the London season ; he had grown corpulent, and his figure had not increased in proper proportion—his legs looked as if liable to snap under his weight ; had he been his own butler, or chief footman, he would certainly have been reduced to the necessity of wearing false somethings in his stockings. A servant in high life would have been ashamed of such thin supports ; but he, an Irish peer, could not demean himself by seeking adventitious aid. His daughter's little peculiarities, no doubt, were known, and her whereabouts too ; but her name was not whispered in his house. His son, Lord Andrin, had married Lady Evelyn Churchurn, who

was gently fascinating and lady-like, quite fit to take the head of her father-in-law's table, though not very bright in some of her remarks ; but satisfied that her irreproachable conduct would draw down no remarks, Lord Andingdron went on with his dinners and receptions the season after Lady Michella's defalcation, and nobody made remarks.

Lady Evelyn married at five-and-twenty, and as she was possessed of an ample fortune, and had countless influential friends, her husband treated her with due respect. She brought him an heir at six-and-twenty, and twin daughters the following year, and showed a marked preference for the nursery. She loved her husband tenderly, and even looked upon his defects with true womanly generosity, as all amiable ones. He was not her first love, either, and he knew it ; but was contented and happy that a titled lady with so fine a fortune as he now possessed with his wife had not fallen to the lot of a priest of the Anglican Church, as she at eighteen meant it should. The Reverend Horace Landon would, probably, had his love for Lady Evelyn come to matri-

mony, have one day risen to a bishopric; friends had looked complacently upon the lovers, and auspicious omens were gathered as to their prospects. Evelyn would have made an excellent clergyman's wife; its quiet duties and parish work, especially, would have suited her tastes; she would have lavished benefits upon the poor, and have been no unprofitable servant, as regarded the talents. Her rich chesnut hair, braided over her clear brow, and thick plaits neatly banded below her simple hat or bonnet, might be seen every morning glancing in the sunshine, as she walked to morning prayers at St. Mary, Longtown. If it rained, she drove her own pretty ponies, and her mother or aunt would be with her. The Reverend Horace was worthy of his prize, good to the poor, a hopeful Christian man, the intimate friend, too, of Lord Andrin, and whenever time allowed, he would get over to Ireland with him. He was a brilliant preacher, and a hardworking, pious, benevolent man; close study had given a look rather worn and older than he was, but he worked on; he wanted to do good and to deserve

Lady Evelyn. Her mother said she was too young to marry ; her guardian talked of how much less difficulty there would be as regarded the property if the lady were of age ; the good clergyman listened to reason, as they said, in defiance of what might seem to many a dismal prospect, namely, to wait their pleasure ; he cheerfully acceded to their wishes, and the young couple were happy in each other for two years, building up in their minds edifices never to be finished, restoring in imagination the fine old church and rendering it a worthy shrine ; but in the last year of probation the reverend man caught the measles, and not believing the doctors, who cautioned him not to enter the cold church too soon, took cold and died.

Lady Evelyn did not sorrow as one without hope, though the joy of life was dashed from her ; she made no rash vows as to her liberty or her property, though her maiden aunt kept her mother uncomfortable by saying she was sure her niece would join the Protestant Sisters of Mercy. She never thought of it, but did a far better thing ; as soon as she could, a deed of gift made sure was handed over to

proper authorities in behalf of the church of St. Mary, Longtown, for certain restorations which had lain heavily on the soul of her Horace, and sixty pounds a year for ever, to go towards an additional curate, that no one need be so over-worked as he was. Lord Andrin knew all this when he proposed for her, and also that so wealthy an heiress as she was had yet plenty left, after this tribute of affection to the church where his friend Horace ministered.

Lord Andrin had loved his friend warmly, and said the little good in his character was produced by his contact with Horace ; he was only a victim to his bringing up, his mornings when in town being spent in lounging about fashionable haunts, where he could meet any one to talk to ; his evenings devoted to the opera, the theatre, or the ball-room. As much as she considered needful, Lady Evelyn went into society with him ; but she was glad to stay with her pretty little children, and her lord was able to amuse himself without her.

The good practical truths she had learned in early life were sometimes in contrast with the views of the little scrap of the great world

which she saw when at her father-in-law's ; but her views were firm, her ideas never wavered ; her quiet observations showed her much, but she always knew what was right and what wrong, and acquired a habit of holding her tongue, which gave opposite characters the belief that she did not understand incidents which were every day occurrences, and only phases of life.

Lady Evelyn lived in that showy house, mingled with ladies of high degree, countless characters around her, did the honors of Lord Andingdron's table, and had withal as simple a heart as when years ago she first learned that there was a gay world, a sort of masquerade eternally going on, and she, a lonely little maid, was fascinated with the accounts she read in books of that land of heterogeneous population. Her disappointment about Horace was never forgotten ; her line of life was a little distorted. She would have preferred the former cast ; but she allowed no regrets to embitter her days,—her first lover had gone to his rest ; her duties were many ; she put her heart and will to fulfil them properly.

Now, it must be explained that a schism existed in the household ; Lord Andrin's mother had lived and died in the Anglican faith, and the son was educated in the like ; while his sister was kept to the religion of her father in the Ursuline Convent at Blackrock, County Cork. Lord Andrin and Horace Landon were friends at school, at college, and in after-life, which is something rare in these times, when youth, like all the rest, seems changing.

Young men are said to have no veneration now ; it is a sad fact that deference for age is dying out, patience is almost gone, youth is hasty, impetuous, headlong, rushing to the end. It was the more remarkable, then, that a strong, fervent friendship existed between these two through boyhood, youth, and maturer age, —for surely a priest has mature ideas, and Lord Andrin was a man of importance in his peculiar sphere.

Between the sisters-in-law there had been much affection ; but since Michella's indiscretion, Lady Evelyn knew they could never meet again, her own name and her children's

demanding it; but in secret she bitterly lamented the loss of her husband's sister, and more so, of her goodness. Evelyn's own conduct was unmistakable; she would never countenance wrong; no sentimental or romantic opinions should actuate her; but she meant with energy to take the case in hand, and, if possible, save Michella; and often when her carriage and fine horses were exciting admiration as she drove for her daily airing, their mistress was turning over in her mind plan after plan to save that frivolous Michella, or aching in her heart would follow the thought of Colonel Farnham's children.

It was always a trial to her that all the family did not worship together, and she attributed her sister-in-law's faults to the want of a true faith, and resolved to guard over her husband's little ones with a most jealous eye, lest any influence should be exerted by Lord Andingdron, who was a severe and, no doubt, a sincere Roman Catholic.

Her brain was overwrought when she returned, with no success, either, for no valid excuse could she find to meddle with affairs.

which presented so hopeless an aspect. At the solemn dinners nobody talked of such matters ; at the complimentary visits, which formed part of Lady Evelyn's employment for her mornings, she gave no latitude for conversation to flow in such a channel that her sister-in-law could be mentioned ; but in private, she and her husband devised schemes which fell to the ground eventually. After her drive on this particular day, she found Lord Andrin waiting for her.

"Well, Evelyn, have you been airing yourself, or doing duty?"

"Airing myself, Herbert ; I did not feel inclined to visit this morning."

"I have just come in from the club, and heard a man talk gravely enough to Ramsdon about Michella and her friend ; it is strange no one knows what has become of her husband."

"Poor Geoffrey ! I feel so much for him. What can be done, Herbert ? Cannot she be rescued ?"

"Impossible. Who would receive her in London ?"

"Is there no refuge for such as she is?"

"Of course, there is the regular refuge; but how would she do there?—it would hardly be a case to reclaim. And would you like Geoffrey to do as Manderville did?—leave his wife five years in a refuge, and then take her back. Geoffrey had better divorce her."

"Poor Geoffrey!" repeated Lady Evelyn; and her eloquent eyes spoke her sorrow for him.

"I wish Michella would show herself less; I must say there is a cool effrontery about her which quite puzzles me; the affair would die off sooner if she would hide herself, but she does not seem to care who sees her."

"People act differently in Italy, Herbert, from what they do at home."

"Yes, more's the pity; it would not surprise me any night to see Michella at the opera."

"No, surely, Herbert,—not in London. What should we do?"

"Forget her countenance, Evelyn; I should, if I had the ill-luck to meet her."

"But she will not surely——"

"Oh, I should hope not, on account of the buzz it would make. Haldon told some fellows in my hearing that many people disbelieve the whole concern."

"Then do they visit her?"

"I suppose so. Now, show me the pups, and I will go."

"Herbert, I will not let you speak disrespectfully of the children; Herbert is as stately as his grandpapa."

"But with better legs, surely!"

"For shame! Wait till you get old, Herbert."

"Oh, if mine are as bad, I shall pad them."

Finding him incorrigible, Evelyn fetched her babies, for the heir could not walk alone, though it was not because his legs were too thin, but rather that fat preponderated there, as all over him; he might just as well be "stately," as his mother said, for he must fine down before rapid movements could be attempted.

Lord Andrin playfully bowed to his son, as if to a royal personage, and the child made a grave gesture of acknowledgment, which de-

lighted his parents ; but a smile soon broke over his babyship, and he enjoyed a wholesome bit of play with his father. The girls bid fair to be beauties. They were christened Evelyn Clara, and Agnes ; the latter was fair, and Clara dark.

“Are they not lovely ?” said their mother.

“Wait till their hair grows, and they have improved hoops,” said Herbert.

“Hoops ! I trust such folly will be done away with before they come out.”

“I grant, ladies in our time are somewhat unmanageable, with their monstrous petticoats, their bracelets, and great head-dresses ; indeed, I must say most women make themselves a bore.”

“Not all, though, Herbert.”

“No, Evelyn ; but where there is one like yourself, there are fifty of no use in the world ; women who do not even mind their babies.”

“I am so glad you let me mind mine.”

“My lovely one ! it is a most becoming occupation. I hate those present day women who enter into constant competition with men ;

indeed, despise us, and think they surpass us ; such women are only failures, Evelyn."

"Then it is better not to attempt too much," and she began to play with Herbert the less.

"Keepers at home—" her husband began, and she gave him a fond, loving look, and took one of the young ladies he had been nursing from him.

"How is it you are at home at this hour?"

"Why, I knew you would be in, and the fact is, I am so vexed about Michella."

"There it is! Whatever we talk or think about, it always ends in that; I wish she were——"

"With you, I suppose, Evelyn; but that would never do. Female relations are of no use after such a step; and my father will never forgive her."

"I fear not. I believe nothing can be done until we convince her of her first errors."

"You good, pious girl, you want her to join the right church! but, I am sorry to say, her sins are not those belonging to her creed only, nor does *her* religion afford the only examples. Shall you go to Lady Bertha Coming's to-

night or to Madame Busseau's with my father?"

"I must see which he prefers."

"Dear, good, dutiful bit of womankind, now let me be off; my family cares must not obliterate all I have to do."

"Kiss Clara first, love; what beautiful eyes!"

"Yes, she will want gold spectacles when she grows up, if you let her stare herself near sighted."

"Herbert, such a dreadful idea!"

"And Agnes is going to have red hair; you must shave it and order a juvenile wig, Evelyn."

"Oh do go away, and good-bye!"

He delighted in his wife and children, but had a queer way of shewing it; however, the said wife was happy with him, and as proud of her babes as mother could be, and often said to herself that, except for one thing, her lot would be without thorns—the one thorn was her sister-in-law.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN THE LUXEMBOURG.

DORA remained in Paris. The girls liked it, so did she, and all felt less dull there than they would have done in England. Miss Fanny wrote affectionately, and Hector was the pride of his grandfather, who insisted upon all vacations that he must be at Claydon Eaves.

Adelaïs was now taller than Warna, and bursting into beautiful young womanhood; slender, and with more delicate features than her sister, she yet required the firmness of purpose which made Warna so fine a character, and which shone in her intelligent face. Adelaïs attracted much notice wherever she went; her lovely eyes were veiled with such long lashes, there was a shadow under them on her cheek; and her fine skin, so pure and white, fell

into delicious dimples when a smile played round her lips.

The girls wore little black hats which shewed all their luxuriant hair, and Dora prided herself upon the extreme neatness of their dress ; it was so neat and perfect as to strike one on that account, and a certain tenderness, which both girls evinced, made beholders look upon Dora as their mother ; she was so staid and grave, they were so genial and hearty with her.

Charles was growing a handsome boy, and as fond of Dora as his sisters, and as fond too of flowers as when he used to pluck the dandelions at Croydon. Charles always had a bouquet on *fête* days, and they come often to those who care for floral feasts.

One had to look again at Dora, to see that she was yet young, her pensive face, and the expression of her great eyes, so full of sorrow, indicated a long course of trial ; but when Warna talked to her, this went off, or when Adelaïs, with her joyous laugh, told some trifling incident, Dora's eyes reflected the light, and part of the youthfulness.

They walked most days in the Luxembourg

Gardens. Dora rather avoided the Tuileries and Champs Elysées; she thought the Luxembourg was more retired, at any rate from English people, and as regarded Colonel Farnham, she had met with no annoyance yet. Nobody in Paris recognised the girls as his daughters, and they had been so little with their father as to feel trifling regret when he was absent.

Miss Greystones used to talk of leaving them, but Dora begged her to be silent; indeed, she lived with them more as a valued friend than as a governess.

Dora's own money came punctually, and that which Colonel Farnham allowed for the maintenance of his family came through her own agents, so she never inquired where George was, and did not know for some weeks, whilst she and the girls walked daily in the Luxembourg, that their father was also in Paris, and that Lady Michella was to be seen every evening at the Italian Opera, her hair brushed back from her forehead, her dress more extravagant, and her jewellery more rich, than even the ultra-fashionables who surrounded

her. More than once lately when Warna and Adelaïs were busy with Miss Greystones, and Dora took a walk with Batting, she had noticed at a photographer's a head and face which reminded her of Lady Michella, and the likeness was so strong, that one day she asked the girl in attendance, whose the portrait was. The girl believed she was some one in the opera, did not know the name ; an old woman behind the counter, advised Dora not to buy the *carte de visite*, saying, "*She was not good.*" Nevertheless, Dora laid down a five franc piece, received her change and carried off the photograph. It was Lady Michella ; hers was a face, once seen, that could not be forgotten. Batting's French was not in sufficient force to enable her to understand the few words about the picture ; she thought her young lady had picked up a *carte* of the Empress or some other court beauty, and took no notice. To Miss Greystones Dora shewed her purchase, and the two felt sorry that the notoriety had even in that silent form arrived in Paris ;—little thought they how near the reality was.

Dora had actually no acquaintances, her life

was as quiet and monotonous as life could be, but as placid; she felt she was shielding the girls from harm, and that she had the approbation of Mr. Farnham and Miss Fanny. Poor Ethel's girls were not forsaken as long as she lived with them. The English clergyman, who noticed their regular attendance at Church, called on them sometimes, as did his wife, but her visits were few and far between, for she had so many English residents to pay attention to. Mr. and Mrs. Howard did not even know the relationship to Colonel Farnham.

One morning, walking up and down their favourite *allée* in the Luxembourg, as they neared the palace again, Dora noticed a figure which seemed familiar; she hastened on, making Adelaïs keep pace till she was near enough to speak, "Good morning."

"My cousin Dora! I am hardened to surprise, however; from whence do you spring?"

"From the shady *allée*, at this moment, but I have lived in Paris for some time."

"And so have I. We found London tiresome, so came here; your favourite and respected aunt finds that age brings infirmities, and re-

greeting that she did not marry sooner, accepts her fate, and puts up with a daughter-in-law."

"Gertrude?"

"Yes, alas! I should have got off if I could, but the two mothers bound me to it. Angeline is married also, and gone to the north pole, or south pole, or somewhere; at any rate she married a sailor, Captain the Hon. Montreal Stotherd—foolish girl!"

"When did she marry?"

"Oh, we all went off together one morning at St. George's, Hanover Square, to be sure; Gertrude would look the best just to spite Stotherd, who is high on my mother's good books, because he discovered some useless island, or ugly rock."

"Is Gertrude in Paris?"

"Yes, to my sorrow, I had to bring some friends of hers to see the pictures here, inside; but you know I stifle when shut up and pant for the *plein air*."

"And where is Angeline, really?"

"Really gone to some desolate region with her foolish husband; we parted after breakfast

on the wedding day, and she will never come home any more," he said, pretending to cry. Adelaïs had run back to Warna when she came near enough, and now the girls and Miss Greystones approached again.

"Satisfy my curiosity, who are your lovely companions?"

"Warna and Adelaïs Farnham."

"What that man's children who were in South Dudley Terrace! those the Maoris?"

"Yes, those are the same."

"I must tell my maternal parent what civilisation has done for them."

"Where is she?"

"Oh, in Paris, too, of course. Gertrude gets on well with her; she has lost her ally Made-moiselle de Merignac, so talks to Gertrude instead. Come and see her."

"Give me first her address."

"Oh, the old house in the Rue de la Paix; my mother is as well known there as the column."

"And you?"

"I live with her. Did you never hear that I belong to this embassy now?"

"I hear nothing, Charlie; out of sight out of mind."

"Poor little Dora, *maman* was terribly afraid of your big eyes, I know."

"But without reason."

"*Not* without reason, I say; they floored me, and sent one poor man wandering over the great desert, and another to drown himself."

Dora turned sharply away, half angry, but she knew his flippant tongue meant little, and she wished to know some one in Paris now, it would be so pleasant for the girls.

"Where is Mrs. Broom, Charlie?"

"In London still; she cannot go down to her marshes alone. Gertrude and Angeline detested the place, but she pretends to think she should miss them there more than in town; indeed so little does she really mind about her property in Norfolk, that she threatens to settle it upon her first grandchild, which is a proof."

"Has she no son?"

"Now, Dora, do not feign quite so much ignorance; her son you know is not a son, but a nephew, and as you likewise know he wants

nothing ; you also know that he is longing to know what to do with what he has."

"Charlie, you are growing like Major Talbot," said Dora, provoked at his declaring that she knew anything of Bishop Broom's movements, which in truth she did not.

"Is it in personal appearance that I resemble that respected friend?" said Charlie, speaking like him.

"Oh, do not teaze, that is too like him."

"Thank you, Dora, now I am seriously hurt, and you must bring your apologies to Gertrude; let me go and speak to the Maories, and then I must look up my wife's sight-seers."

Dora hesitated.

"Am I not a respectable married man?"

"But you call them Maories!"

"I will call them what you like, poor girls. Dora, do you know that Lady Michella is in Paris?"

"No, but I am very sorry to hear it; I must take them away then; is their father here too?"

"I do not know, she was pointed out as a star two or three times lately; of course I did

not say that I ever had the honour of her acquaintance."

"What am I to do, Charles?"

"Well, I should say there is little fear of their meeting, you travel pretty different ways; at all events, you will not meet Lady Michella at my mother's, so come and see her to-morrow. Now introduce me, they are again near." They walked a few steps towards the girls.

"Warna, Adelaïs, this is my cousin, Charles Meath."

And for a few minutes the *attaché* talked to two of the most graceful and pretty girls he had ever met; indeed, he spoke in such a random way about things in general, and so much about them, that Gertrude and Lady Meath both told him the Maoris had touched his heart.

"Oh that my heart were free, and polygamy permitted," was his reply.

CHAPTER XIV.

MEETING.

LADY MEATH actually rose from her sofa, and met Dora in the middle of the room, when she paid her a visit next morning; cordiality which almost astonished her niece. Perhaps Dora had earned her friendship, perhaps Charlie's marriage with Gertrude Broom put aside fears in that quarter, or Lady Meath felt respect for her, knowing how she had stood by the children of her nephew George Farnham.

They met warmly for once, but talked on the most indifferent subjects as long as any others were present. Gertrude was less boisterous than formerly; her toilette too was more simple, and better suited to her complexion. A host of foreigners were in the room when Dora

arrived, and Gertrude did her share in entertaining them, though she knew they all came to see Lady Meath, her own marriage only having rendered herself a person of any interest; thus Gertrude became actually modest, and modesty must have suited her, for all the strangers said "*Elle est charmante*," and Dora thought so too.

There came a lull, a troop of persons left together; and Gertrude seeing Lady Meath had a companion in her niece, retreated to her own apartments, for she was newly married and glad to think over her happiness, and all her pretty things.

Lady Meath then asked Dora about the children, saying,—

"Charlie tells me Colonel Farnham's girls are growing up and will be fine women. I hope that odious woman will never preside over Claydon Eaves. Miss Fanny writes that her brother is in better health than for years past, and bids fair to live for long enough to come."

"I am glad to hear it; I could better forgive her if she kept quiet, but to parade her conduct

is too much. Charles has met her several times. She must be the most hardened of sinners ; I am told she goes to mass every day too, and in the most striking of dresses. She courts notice."

"Do you hear anything of George?"

"No, I suppose he must be gone back to his regiment, though Charlie says his brother officers will cut him; I only wish they would, the world would be wiser if it cut such a man as that."

"Do you think it well for me to remain in Paris with the children? I brought them here because it seemed so safe a place to keep out of her way, and she is come."

"Yes, thrusting herself into notoriety. I am angry when I think of her; she has two or three favourite priests who escort her, it seems, and no doubt promise her absolution. I chafe when I think of her daring to parade her beauty here, it makes one loathe her."

Lady Meath grew warm and denounced the offender. Dora, really anxious for her charges, asked,—

"Tell me though, you did not reply to my question; is it well for us to remain here?"

"I cannot tell, child, you will be at no festivals of her church, nor at operas or suppers with her. The father is not worthy to see his young daughters, or it would be well to stay ; a meeting would be painful to you, and her dangerous beauty might ensnare the girls. I am told she can fascinate anyone."


"What shall I do?" said Dora.

"What do you think of taking up your abode in my town house in South Dudley Terrace. Do so, if your life there before did not disgust you with it."

"Thanks. I believe it would be a very good thing to do ; besides, we should be nominally under your protection, and that would be well."

"Yes, there would be no harm in it, but I cannot think the woman is so abandoned as to wish to bring the girls into trouble ; if you decide to go, the house steward shall write to the woman in charge, and she will prepare rooms."

"You are very good. Paris is changed for me already, I feel flattered, and my liberty curtailed, so I decide at once and accept the offer of your house with thanks ; we will go



at the end of this week. I am accustomed to sudden removals, so always sit easily and loosely in apartments, ready for a start."

"Bring the girls to-morrow to see me, and the next day too, it always amuses you to see *du monde*. My dear Merignac is dead, I am sorry to say, and there is no one to supply her place, no one of the old time; but there are very few left of our days. Are George Farnham's boys doing well?"

Dora gave satisfactory accounts of both, and took leave, feeling as if Lady Meath were really her aunt, and cared something for her now.

Miss Greystones, who knew the truth, agreed with Dora that it was well to leave; Batting had just grown amused with a new set of servants who had arrived the week before with an English family, and grumbled at going to that empty town-house; but in her heart of hearts London was more acceptable to her than any other spot in the wide world, so she began to pack with more alacrity than Miss Greystones expected, considering her reluctance in words.

Lady Meath was most gracious to Werna,

and presented her with a necklace of Indian workmanship, rare, and wonderful to behold. She gave Adelaïs a casket of scented wood, which contained bracelets of great value; the young girls thought her courtly ways delightful, and talked about her when they got home with ecstasy, and a tinge of romance was mixed with their thoughts about her ladyship; for the reserve which they had held towards her when living in her house had made them respect her exceedingly, and her distant manner then, having softened into courtesy now, was very flattering to their youthful minds; they felt as if she thought them worth civility now they were growing up.

Two days running they visited her, and saw men of note who had written or made discoveries; men of whom they had heard or read, and they thought Lady Meath an enviable lady to have such distinguished guests.

Dora told them they were going to London and to Lady Meath's house; this salved the blow, for they had enjoyed Paris; she made no further explanation. She could not tell these young and dutiful creatures that their father

was the cause of their departure; that a shadow had fallen upon his name; that he had proved unworthy of their mother. Adelaïs said,—

“In London we shall see papa and Hector oftener.”

Dora did not undeceive her; she only felt hot, and anxious to move away, and the children had enjoyed what she had thought captivity for them in Lady Meath’s house, and were not sorry to go there again.

She went to say good-bye to Mr. and Mrs. Howard, but the clergyman was out, and his wife unwell, so a card with “Miss Handon, P.P.C.,” told all they knew about her movements.

Time was, when a journey from Paris to London was considered noteworthy; now, Bradshaw tells of so many hours, you hear no more about the transit. Dora thought of her journey before with her mother, and left again in sorrow, though of a different kind; the anguish of her mother’s death could not be repeated, that was a comfort. Gone are the days of the diligences; one reads with curiosity of the leather thongs, and rope

harness, of the resounding whips and velvet-suited postilion, and his rattling spurs; now the railway rushes past vineyards and corn-fields, one has but an occasional view of groups of peasantry along the roads, the wooden shoes are seldom seen, or any of the curiosities peculiar to old French travel. Dora had before gone by *chemin de fer*,—even that was not new,—only they took the Boulogne route this time, and so avoided the pangs which a sight of Rouen, Dieppe, or Newhaven would have caused her. By the tidal boat travelled with them an elderly lady, thin and careworn, who spoke harshly to a daughter whose efforts to please her were fruitless. Dora sat beside them beneath the awning for some time, and pitied the querulous mother as well as the daughter, who exerted herself to satisfy the invalid, for such Dora concluded the elder lady must be.

Their talk was principally about “Charlotte,” and Dora could not close her ears to the words of her fellow voyagers. Charlotte had given offence, but she was ill or in distress, and mother and sister seemed to be going to the

rescue. Such appeared to the unwilling listener to be the case, whereas it was quite otherwise. Charlotte offered a home to mother and sister, and insisted in the kindness of her heart upon their quitting Boulogne ; and the mother went, but resented the kindliness which did so insist, because Charlotte had married beneath her condition in life. Laura knew that affluence was not to be despised ; she was tired of the tall poplars which skirted their suburban villa, and the still retirement which the mother had exacted at Boulogne, lest they might fall in with people of low degree ; and it was luxury to the said Laura to know that she would have the society of Charlotte again, as well as the change from such exceeding quiet, as had suited the ideas of perfect gentility due to her mother's will, to the movement of the crowd, and the thousand and one attractions she hoped to meet in the immediate vicinity of the metropolis where Charlotte lived. The invalid lady had lineaments which told Dora of a beautiful early youth ; but want of contentment had preyed upon her physiognomy. The daughter was tall, and her countenance expressive of re-

signation ; a sort of "let me die in peace" look prevailed, no doubt produced by the constant grumbling of her companion. Dora was drawn towards this lady, who seemed older than herself, but like herself had suffered ; tears had flowed from those eyes like rivers ; she fixed them on Dora with an earnest gaze, and Dora blushed ; she could not tell why, she felt as if her arms would willingly encircle her, and that she should like to burst into tears.


The ladies were Mrs. Morton and Laura ; they and Dora had never met before and never met again, and without being aware of it, Dora recognised a likeness ; Melville Morton had features almost as finely chiselled as his sister's, his lips and hers were alike, also the nose ; she opened her eyes and fixed them with a deep look as if adoration were natural, just as he did ; something in the eyelid too was alike, and a motion of the hands which were both clasped when anything kindled a spirit of pathos within ; so Dora felt a thrill when looking at this lady who was taller than herself, nearly as tall indeed as Melville, for he was almost small, and feminine for a man, yet Laura smaller, looked

large as a woman; it was this which prevented Dora knowing what had touched her so, at intervals, during that short voyage. Laura's beseeching tones, and her gentle, entreating voice, when she tried to soothe her mother, brought before Dora the form and voice of the brother, as he sat or knelt beside the bed of Golden Pippin.

CHAPTER XV.

DRIFTING.

MISS GREYSTONES had been in the cabin, and likewise the girls, during the passage. Batting came on deck with them trembling, and fussy about the luggage ; trembling with terror, for she had felt the motion more down below, and was dreading lest the cabs at Folkestone would be all occupied, or the train go without them, or twenty unlikely things should happen. Dora had never seen her so disturbed ; she was generally useful and energetic. However, her reveries were broken, she had sat quietly on her camp-stool, and must now move ; involuntarily she took one more look at Laura, and then walked away with Werna, listening to the rich voice till it became in distance an inarticulate murmur, for



Laura had to explain a hundred things to Mrs. Morton, whose mind was weak with constant fretting. They were scarcely in the waiting-room before Batting called aside Miss Handon.

"Do you know, miss, they say the colonel has turned Catholic?"

"Who says so, Batting?"

"There was a sick girl in the cabin, miss, and I helped her maid to settle her pillows and lift her, and the maid and I had a little conversation sitting together on the stairs, for the ladies were quiet, reading on the sofas or at the saloon table, and she said, 'As I've a soul to save, I'm sorry we're going to Scotland. I hate the country.'

"'That is a pity,' said I, 'if you have to live there.'

"'Yes,' she said; 'in Edinburgh there is a doctor who is to cure my young lady, after our Paris doctor has failed; I don't believe in him, nor does she, but her friends are afraid to let her try Paris any longer.'

"'Why?' I asked.

"'Oh, they say the physicians and all the

people are Jesuits, and in Scotland they dread everything.'

" 'You are not Scotch, then ? ' I said.

" 'No, indeed, I belong to Westminster ; but as Miss Frazer is to go right through London, I shall have no time to see my friends. Who are you with ? ' she asked.

" And I, thinking no harm, turned the little travelling bag I had upon my arm, and showed her the address of Lady Meath's house in town.

" 'And are those pretty young ladies Miss Meaths ? ' said she.

" 'No, they are Miss Farnhams,' I said.

" 'Oh,' said she, the bold thing, 'did you hear about that Mr. or Colonel Farnham in Paris ; our man-servant says he has turned Papist because of the lady ? ' "

" I got up, Miss Dora," continued Batting, "so mad at myself for mentioning the name to that impertinent girl, that I actually felt sick with vexation."

"It seems a pity, Batting, to gossip just now ; but you say this Miss Frazer's maid is going to Edinburgh, so you will not meet her again."

"No, but she will tell everybody that she saw the Miss Farnhams, and that they are going away to avoid their father."

"It is true, Batting."

"True! Miss Dora? Is he in Paris, really. I did not know, and I declared so positively to that girl that he was still in Italy that she laughed at me, and I could see she knew I belonged to the name."

"Well, Batting, calm yourself, we shall have no further annoyance, and I do not fear, as far as regards the girl's report, upon religious matters."

"Sure to goodness, Miss Dora, he will not do that?"

The house in South Dudley Terrace was all ready for them, and Dora was very glad to rest her mind and body; once out of reach of Paris, she left Colonel Farnham, as she could not talk of him, and a sensation stole over her that something was drawing near. The setting sun, even in London, was watched, for at that hour she habitually counted over days and weeks, and on this evening she experienced a certainty that she was remembered,

and Melville Morton was more in her mind than ever. It was the sight of his sister, Laura, which induced this feeling.

He had said, at parting, "Dare I venture to look forward? if I were to return in a year or two——" That time had not elapsed, and yet a little bell kept announcing that his return was near, a little titilating sound in her ears, a drop of holy oil, consecrating her hours, and rendering them bearable, assured her that the closing scene must shortly be played; the curtain of her future life must not hang much longer, its heavy folds must be lifted and the piece go on. A secret thought or two produced joy, a wish to live; her self-accusing spirit could see now how fondly he had loved, and how she had driven him away, cast him from her.

She made this confession to herself, meek and lowly in heart; the door of hope was opened, she was glad to be in London, if he came or wrote it seemed more direct. She knelt and prayed for wisdom from above, to grant her patience, and to direct her ways.

Hector came on the following Sunday to see

his sisters and Charles, and pleased Dora by his noble bearing, and the progress he was making; she took great pains with the younger brother, in order that when he was sent to school he should likewise know how to get on.

Lady Meath this time did not allow Dora to fall into the isolation which formerly closed her days. She told several people of her existence, people who were always in or near town, and shortly Miss Handon had no lack of acquaintance, and of the kind particularly admired by Batting—carriage people. Every day one or two well-appointed equipages were to be seen at the door, to the intense delight of Miss Eliza, who said, "If her ladyship herself were at home people could not show better respect." It was good for Dora, and also for the girls, for they were taken out to drive or to shop, and never got into the old Hilda Villa state of repose.

Dora's father and his sister Mary scarcely saw each other after childhood. Mary was of a roving turn from infancy, and always said she never would settle down to the humdrum

life which her schoolfellows led, for two or three were married whilst she was there. Finally, Mary, restless in England, went early in life to Ceylon, with a relative, General Davis and his wife. Delighted with eastern manners and scenes, she remained in Asia year after year. Mrs. Davis died, and Mary Handon was not married in spite of all people would say ; she found another lady willing to take the nominal charge of her ; in reality there was none ; Mary could do for herself, but unmarried still, she required a chaperone. Her experiences and travels would form a volume, as they did form subjects of surprise to numbers who listened to her recitals, after long years. Life was on the wane when she married, and, as Charlie Meath used to say, that accounted for his having so old a mother.

Warna and Adelaïs had the run of the mansion on this occasion, and made discoveries for many days of treasures heaped up or stored away, relics of countless value to the antiquary ; the whole might have been added to the British Museum, only that edifice, like many others, is over-stocked.

Lord Meath's library contained all the written grammars of odd languages; and useless lumber as they now were, he had made good use of them, and Charlie could have been a linguist, but his lot was cast near home. Dora thought his early marriage had softened her aunt most wonderfully; she was quite woman-like now, and not jealous of Gertrude, but willing to share with her the possession of Charlie. She could not have borne a separation from him; this Gertrude also knew, and, wise girl, made herself at home with the peculiarities of Lady Meath, and treated her with affectionate respect.

So once more Dora is settled for some time, and not uncomfortably, as if none went out, and none came in. Eliza Batting learned a good lesson on board the Folkestone packet, and made no more rash friendships. So the South Dudley Terrace house is under her control, and that she likes. Her friends from the country are allowed to come and see her, and are treated with hospitality; and the mistress of the "Golden Angel" rejoices in her prosperity. Miss Greystones and the young ladies continue

regular systems as to work and exercise, and the girls are happy and gay-hearted. They came home one morning from their walk with a colour in their cheeks worthy of country air, so bright and cheerful, they seemed to send sunshine into the room before them.

"Oh, Aunt Dora, we have been carrying two of the sweetest little things ; what do you think we found out ?"

"What little things ? lambs ?" asked Dora.

"No, not lambs here !" said Adelaïs, who had always had a singular fancy to pick up lambs.

"They were twin babies," explained Warna ; "such dear little, pretty creatures, the nurses let us carry them."

"And they have such eyes, one blue and one black !" Adelaïs was surprised at Dora's smile. "I mean," she said, "one child has black eyes, the other blue."

"Oh ! I am glad they are divided properly."

"To-morrow the nurse says the little boy will be out, too ; but he was not well to-day, so was to drive with his mamma."

"Perhaps his mamma would rather that such

very inexperienced nurses did not interfere with her twins."

"Oh, Aunt Dora, we are most careful. Come with us to-morrow, and see us carry them."

Dora had to go, for the girls had exacted a promise from the nurses to come a particular way, and had enforced punctuality, so two snowy white little robes soon appeared, and a third attendant stooped beside a fat little boy. The girls took little notice of the addition, but greeted the nurses kindly, and were permitted to hold the lovely babies.

Dora saw that the third person was not a servant, and made a little apology for the impetuosity of the girls; the lady smiled sweetly, and seemed proud of the admiration. Then Dora knew she must be the mother. The recreation passed, nursing those children, and Dora talked a little sometimes to the lady with the fat little boy she called Herbert. At length Miss Greystones, fearing Adelaïs' slight frame might be fatigued, said,—

"Miss Farnham, give nurse your baby, and then your sister will be satisfied to give up hers; she will be too tired."—

The lady started a little at the name of Farnham, and Dora could not help a shade of annoyance coming upon her. What right had this stranger to notice the name? In the midst of comfort and luxury, this disagreeably crept in, that the name of the girls had become a *known* one. The lady was too noble-hearted to ask questions, but she had showed that the name was one she had heard before. Dora thought it struck unpleasantly upon her ear, and she made up her mind that the girls should walk in another direction for the future. They kissed, and covered the faces of the twins with their lace veils, and gave a winning smile to Master Herbert and his governess, as they concluded she was. Dora said, coldly,—

“I hope you will forgive my nieces, they will not trouble you again.” She bowed, and went her way.

Lady Evelyn described all this to her husband when she got home, and as she felt interested in the two young girls, he let her talk on.

“I feel so sure they are Colonel Farnham’s

daughters that I should like to know where they live."

"Evelyn, do not find out; a collision is better avoided; depend upon it, they have someone to look after them."

"I do feel so sorry for them, Herbert."

"Yet they seem to be pretty happy, according to your account."

"They had nice looking people with them; and they did say so much about Clara and Agnes——"

"As quite to win your heart, Evelyn; now let my very common sense come into play, and think no more about your babies' admirers, or your chance acquaintance may become both numerous and troublesome. These girls may be somebody else, after all."

"So trite a remark deserves consideration," said his wife, playfully; "now go and let me rest, for I have to go out four nights this week, as my bounden duty, and to be present at the solemn feast of the ambassadors this evening."

Lord Andrin noted that his wife was growing as gay and light-hearted as he could wish.

When he married her she was too thin to be beautiful, but contentment and her domestic happy life had much improved her looks ; she was not only graceful and agreeable now, but daily becoming handsomer in his eyes, as in others, which was better than all.

CHAPTER XVI.

LAURA.

LAURA MORTON and her mother arrived at Charlotte's home and were affectionately received. Charlotte was much altered, she had grown into a fine, stout, handsome woman, dressed in rich silks, and wore a sort of apology for a cap, a head-dress of ribbon and fine lace, as became the step-mother of so many great, growing-up children. Her husband's name was Darton, a worthy man, whose income had doubled within late years, as he now had become a partner in the house where he was formerly only a clerk. His savings and continued prosperity gave Charlotte ample means, and she longed to have her mother and sister away from Boulogne, where she knew they must be leading so isolated a life.

Mrs. Morton would not have given up the lonely gentility; but her health was broken, she had lost the younger son in whom, she had told herself her pride would truly be. Melville had paid all the expenses of his education, and acted a father's as well as a brother's part towards him; and Mrs. Morton, growing old with care and anxiety, looked to his coming forth into the world to renew her feelings of youth and joyousness. She was singularly ungrateful to Melville all her life; she had been so accustomed to trust to him for payments, that she claimed all he did as a right, and never thought his utmost sacrifice worthy of thanks.

The younger son died rather suddenly, and all his debts were paid by Melville; but the mother blamed Doctor Morton, even for the death which none could have averted.

"Laura, he killed my boy! he allowed him such a miserable pittance, it was a mere bread and water life! Melville was always so stingy about accounts."

"Dear mother, do not say so, there never was such a son, or such a brother."

"Nonsense, Laura, he kept Johnny six long hours every day, you know, at those horrid books, when he ought to have been amused with painting, music, or light literature, which would have saved his life."

"You know, mother, those are not the things to take a degree upon, and Johnny passed with such honour."

"What is all the honour to me, Laura?"

In despair Laura told Charlotte all her mother's grumblings, and the sisters arranged to make the move to London, and to share Mr. Darton's house. Laura was delighted, she liked Mr. Darton much, a good, sensible, middle-aged Englishman, and the young Dartons, though they talked too much about volunteers and Whitford, Mount-Storms or Enfield rifles, pleased her. Looking at their young faces and frames, full of energy, was to Laura like reading stirring poetry, she believed them—they said, "we live in glorious days," and she was carried away by them and forgot all the past.

There were two Miss Dartons, also, with hair dressed in the modern fashion, dragged off

the forehead, which is so unsuitable to English faces, but Charlotte did not interfere; few women remain sensible enough to be quite natural, especially amongst the class to which the Dartons belonged; they must aim at something. So they dressed their hair as much like the Empress of the French as they could, and wore silk dresses of bright hues, and with costly trimmings, such as duchesses can wear without injury in their roomy carriages. The Miss Darton tribe of women forget that they must walk in their fine gowns, or squeeze them into cabs, or, perhaps, an omnibus! disarranging the rotundity of the crinoline, and risking the loss of some yards of quilling or lace. It is reserved for the upper ten thousand to do as they like in dress, for their taste is better, and they have no one to imitate, so can dare to be independent.

The young Darton men were very neat and sensible in their dress, manly, and fit for anything; drilling had brought them into shape, and they were shrewd, observant young men; too rational to lavish money upon finniking finery, as their sisters did; but Charlotte knew

the folly of the age, and could only regulate the household, the girls would not brook much meddling from a step-mother. She, however, set them a good example, dressed well, and even richly, as said before, but her clothes were made fit to walk in, plain and good, not furbelowed and fringed to catch in her husband's feet when he took her out.

Mrs. Morton declared the vulgarity of the Darton house was killing her, whereas she had a trim, pretty little sitting-room furnished expressly for her, with taste and comfort; she never encountered the family unless she chose. Laura neglected her, she said; since they came to England, every thing went wrong; but the wrong was in herself, poor woman. Mr. Darton was more than polite to her, but nobody could satisfy her; and at last she confined herself completely to her own rooms, and there wasted away a life which might have been happier. Laura had difficulty to get her to send her blessing to Melville; poor mother, she denied herself the greatest comfort she could have, in refusing to honour her excellent son. After her death, Laura was glad to remain at Black-

heath with Mrs. Darton, and eventually married her old love, the Rev. James Buckler, and went with him to his pretty vicarage in Yorkshire. Fourteen years had been the time of probation, for James wanted her to help him in his first curacy, but Mrs. Morton, living a fashionable life at Cheltenham, disdained his offer, and Laura was told it was impossible, contrary to everything. James patiently abided, more than once renewed his protestations, and Mrs. Morton, selfish in her refusal, could not spare Laura ; however, life was well on, when her mother died, and Charlotte, knowing how faithfully the two loved, told the story to her husband, and he skilfully arranged a meeting.

With regard to pecuniary results, the profession of James Buckler had been precarious, his pay small, and his charities great, so his private income had been little enough ; but he had given to the poor, and, lo ! it had been more than repayed. Without patronage he had worked on, and merit had, for once, been crowned with its reward ; he had a vicarage and six hundred a year to offer to share with

Laura, and she, her necessities entirely removed, could be free, and no longer a burthen to that good brother whose every effort she appreciated.

She took possession of her new home, and left the most favourable impression behind upon all the Darton family; from Charlotte's house she married, and went to shed a blessed influence over her husband, and his friends, and parishioners. We can look at her in her pretty drawing-room, the window opening upon the lawn, and floral sweetness bursting in. The Reverend James is writing a note at a table between the wife and the window. Laura has a hat, and gloves, and a basket beside her, as she reads,—she is going out with him; they have settled down at once to a regularity of life which would be jeopardy to a girl of eighteen.

Laura's fourteen years have rendered her very sage; she is not too grave, however, and her husband has a cheery, smooth intonation, which carries all before him. Laura wants to live a Darby and Joan life, to be a helpmeet, nothing else would suit her.

Had her mother approved of her marrying, she might have done so long ago ; but she does not repine, the present is quite enough : she resigns herself to a tame and unromantic state with manifest affection for it.

They go out, and they come in ; a happy equality, an amiable, well-principled liberty, pervades the vicarage. Mr. Buckler is dignified as a priest, and preaches with fervour, fluency, and animation ; he is a good man, and beloved. Mrs. Buckler has gained all hearts—rich and poor like her ; the peculiar expression Dora noticed about the lips renders her words persuasive ; the loving look in her eyes when she casts their full light upon one, makes you think that, though not young, Laura is beautiful and bewitching.

She writes long letters to her brother, about the brighter prospects than ever she had hoped for, about how little excitement there had been in her renewed courtship, and quiet marriage ; but her excitement is in her husband's parish, and amongst her new neighbours ; she knows Melville will pray for her. She knows he will trust James with her, on

account of the permanency of his attachment ; in fact, though she would deny it, her brother thinks the pages are full of youthful enthusiasm.

CHAPTER XVII.

BATTLING WITH THE WAVES.

WE must go back a little to Dora, who, in Lady Meath's house, was spending her time pleasantly. Mrs. Broom was amongst her frequent visitors for several days, until she said she must go down into Norfolk, for the place was deserted too long. Strange to say, Mrs. Broom never mentioned her nephew, and Dora was ignorant of his present *locale*. Batting told her he was at Baghdad, but how did she know? and what right had she to inquire anything concerning his movements? Dora thought this, but did not speak to Batting, who might misconstrue her question; but if Dora was ignorant her attendant was not, that Fortune had favoured Madame's nephew, and he was more eccentric than ever.

Dora was surrounded by her own household party, and two or three chance visitors, when the servant brought in two or three letters ; something told her two of them were extraordinary ones ; she put them into her pocket, without seeing more than that the stamps were foreign. Miss Greystones detected a shudder, and knew something was come. Dora talked on with wonderful self-command ; her light step followed her visitors to the door, and then the mask slipped aside, and she rushed to her own room, threw herself on the floor, and sobbed. One letter was from *him*.

She could not doubt its meaning ; so, having caressed it, and dried the tears from her large, black eyes, she read the others first. One was from Miss Fanny, only, in reply to her last weekly bulletin ; the second was from Major Talbot, who was in trouble again. *The* letter was opened at last, dated New Zealand. She read :—

“ MY DEAR MISS HANDON,

“ I have never forgotten that, at our parting, you did not deny me the request I

made ; namely, that I might see you again if I could return to England. I hope to leave on the 20th of next month, by the Queen of Wangoa. May I ask the favour of an address being sent to the agents, Messrs. —, London, by which I shall know whether I am to live or die. I cannot presume to ask more at present,

“ Yours ever,

“ MELVILLE MORTON.”

Then Dora considered. “By the 20th of next month, or thereabouts, he may arrive! a month, more or less, after this letter! I wish he had not said ‘to live or die’; and I wish Charles Meath had not spoken of a man I had ‘drowned.’ What folly! he knows nothing. I am growing superstitious.” Then she read and re-read the letter, but no certainty would come into her mind; she could not coax the intense joy into more than a smothered existence. His fine features would come before her, too, in her long vigil in the lonely night; his high and strongly-marked forehead, but his face was worn to emaciation;

she could hear his low, sweet voice, but she remarked that in all her dreams his countenance was wan and wasted.

She repeated to herself "he is coming," and her eyes would fill, and then repel the tears ; and she went about her daily duties with light flashing from them, and a restless brilliancy in them like sunshine upon water.

She dressed carefully at all times, but more so the day after the letter, and richly, too ; she would make herself sensible of her gladness ; but at night, again, she dreamed of him, and opened her eyes, and thought she saw him standing close beside her, a glad smile on his face ; then, his mouth was sunken and colourless. She got up and roused herself, and struck a light, and reasoned, and read her letter once again, reckoned how soon it would require to send the address to the agents, and made a mark against the day in her little pocket-almanack.

She composed herself to sleep, and again awoke trembling, and her gaze riveted ; her raven hair had all escaped in her restlessness, and her black eyes were dilated with terror ;

she was gazing on his exquisite face, when a death change passed over it, and he put forth his hand which became that of a skeleton. Dora grasped the counterpane in her agony, and felt as if the room were haunted. An instant after his face, terribly distinct, was close beside her, but calm and pale; and in her ears there came a sound of rushing waters, and bubbles rose above the foam, and Charles's words, "drowned one poor fellow," rang in her ears.

The wretched girl flung on a dressing-gown, and ran to Miss Greystones' room, and told her she had had a miserable dream—a nightmare, but would describe nothing. Miss Greystones tried to soothe, and feared she must be ill. Twice Dora put her back, and faintly spread out her hands, as if to battle with waves; and then a low moan escaped her, and Miss Greystones said,—

"I am sure you are not well; do let me send for help."

But Dora said, "No, do not, I am right again now; but it was such a dreadful dream! What time is it? I cannot go to bed again."

Miss Greystones urged that she would lose her rest ; but, finding it too early to get up, she sat till six o'clock in the large chair in her friend's room, and would not face her own, till daylight flooded it and drove away mysterious shadows.

Dora was not weak of nerve or mind, but this time her vision caused such distress that she could not bear it alone ; and whilst she dressed she began to dread what the next night might bring ; she felt shaken, and Batting grew concerned and inquisitive till she was sent to fetch some tea.

After the tea Dora grew very calm, and told herself that she was sure that paroxysm foretold a mystery ; either that Melville had been deterred from coming to England, or that the darksome grave had closed upon him in New Zealand, or that he had perished on the voyage ; his ghastly face and farewell smile could not be banished from her mind : but her calmness was forced, and she knew how to control her own countenance during breakfast, and how to hide her sorrows from the children.

Miss Greystones observed her narrowly, but she could only get, in answer to inquiries,—

“I am all right again now, thanks; but I had a fit of nightmare, I believe, and following my first impulse ran to your room. I am sorry I disturbed your night’s rest, do not speak of it again. By the way, Batting tells me those pretty twin babies belong to Lord Andrin; so it will be as well to amuse the girls in some other direction. Go anywhere you please with them, I am now going to write to Miss Fanny.” And Miss Greystones saw that she refused to be comforted.

More than ordinary excitement always called forth with Dora her cold state. She was rigidly calm and cool when, half an hour afterwards, Major Talbot was announced.

“I am surprised,” said Dora; “you said you would not leave Coblenz.”

“I nevertheless contrived to come, *via* Ostend.”

“I am sorry——” Dora began.

“You must shelter me.”

“That is impossible; this house is not mine; and I cannot, and will not.”

"You will have to do it, Miss Handon ; you have the reputation of talent ; you must sustain your reputation."

"I cannot hear nonsense, Major Talbot."

"Your imagination, always on the alert, seeks offence where there is none ; your conversational vivacity ought not to be confounded with good spirits : opinion of others is your destiny, a despotic power to which you are a slave, that is all."

"I told you I will not listen to nonsense, Major Talbot."

"You are always flattering ; I will not deceive you. I am of all men the most miserable ; my pursuits have ended in distress, I am ruined, hopeless, and no one is grateful for all the sacrifices I have made."

Dora rose from her chair.

"This house, sir, is not mine ; the servants are few, but quite enough to rid it of intruders. I am sorry to hurt your feelings by numbering you with such ; but you and I, Major Talbot, belong to different worlds,—we have not an idea, a word, or a hope in common."

"Be less talented and more charitable, my

dear ex-ward ; I rather disdain than covet the luxuries which are about you, at my age we desire riches for others more than for ourselves. Drive me not from your presence, but rather protect my grey hairs."

"I cannot, Major Talbot."

The old man was weedier than ever ; his face had grown sunburnt, or by some means was darker than formerly. It had lost its ruddy appearance ; his hair, too, had parted with the last tinge of red, or *auburn* as it used to be ; it was now of an uniform tint of unbecoming faded grey, his whiskers and moustaches cut off, no doubt with a view to escape identity. Dora could not make out from his wordy letter, nor from the still more wordy interview, what he had done, or what his trouble was. All social vices crave for novelty, there was scarcely a vice that could own the merit of being a stranger to him. Dora denied the refuge he sought in Lady Meath's house, for she knew he was unworthy, and a shelter there would bring discredit on the roof ; besides, as she justly said, she had no right to grant it.

"I am so sorry you came here, Major Talbot ; why did you ?"

"That unspiritual god, Circumstance, who delights to mock our schemes, devoted me—showing me false landmarks, as I find."

"You could not hope, with any justice, that I could harbour you here," Dora said.

"Harbour me ! Take care, Miss Handon ; I can bring you to repentance for that speech by producing you in a Court of Justice. Thomas Musgrave Talbot is not the man to be insulted with impunity ; I am under arrest for liabilities connected with the wretched home I call my own. I sat and dreamed of my little ward, and built up brilliant impossibilities, which fate, as usual, dashes to the ground. I placed myself in the situation of one who asks a favour, and my ward, with the ingratitude of her sex, spurns me, violates my warmth of feeling, and refuses me her hospitality. How I am bound in chains of iron ! and she sees me writhe at her feet with a dry and pitiless eye, the——"

He was growing so violent that Dora rang

a peal, which brought up the man-servant, and Batting too.

"I am very sorry, Major Talbot," said Dora; "open the door, Edwards; good morning."

"One moment, Miss Handon; granted, that your hospitality is nil, let me consider what it ought to be: to receive an old friend for a few days would cost, say so much, give me the so much, and I will honour your hospitality at an hotel; you are a professing Christian, and circumstances have been propitious. I often think of the words of the profane Cardinal, 'who saw the gold and jewels offered in profusion by the pious,' Holy Saints! How profitable has this fable of Christianity been to us!"

Dora was too angry to speak; she gave him four sovereigns from her purse, and left the room. Batting, tossing her head, had only to say, "Now, sir;" and the old man lowered his eyes, and under the shaggy eyebrows they were in deep shadow; he had a thoroughly good-for-nothing appearance as he left the house. The man-servant, a stranger, took him for an importunate beggar, or impostor; and

Batting, grown discreet, did not inform him that the poor, sordid-looking, decayed individual had once been the guardian of Miss Handon.

The man was haggard with fatigue, and hunted down by what he called his liabilities ; he had committed crime after crime, and eluded detection, but this time he was truly afraid, since his plan to hide under Dora's wing was foiled. He thought that he had power left to work upon her generosity, and to wheedle her into acting at his suggestion, but she was too keenly alive to his character, and forced herself to drive him from her.

Castle Talbot, as long as he lived, belonged to him, but was only an incumbrance ; such a state of utter neglect and dilapidation as it had been suffered to fall into, never was seen. The farms were badly let, and no good agent looked to the leases, or saw that the land was properly tilled ; flax had been grown, crop after crop, till the soil was so impoverished, that years would be required of good manure and proper care before it would pay for labour.

The butchers from Innescroft, years ago, took the meadow lands for grazing, but they were grazed out; and the sheds and barns, unroofed, had fallen into a damp mass of decayed matter, all vestige of timber having been drawn from beneath for firing by the peasantry.

Clooneden, the adjacent village, was a disgrace and a stain; so foul a spot as it was, had no right to fester in the sunshine; the few houses standing were mean and dingy; wood-work rotting, doors and windows broken, pools of water in front, in which a few ducks or geese gabbled and cackled, or plumed themselves upon heaps of rubbish, which had been the thatch of a cottage. Law-suits without end had risen, because the boundaries were broken down, fences had disappeared, or ditches got filled up; sheep or horses were impounded for trespassing, neighbour quarrelled with neighbour; there was no one to apply to. Major Talbot was abroad; the agent would write, and after frequent stirring up, and much delay, he did write, and obtained in some weeks one of those long-winded epistles which

nobody could make out. By that time the crop was spoiled or eaten, and the tenant would throw up his lease.

The son, who was in the Civil Service in India, came home once, and spent some money in alleviating the distress of the miserable dwellers in Clooneden. He was told that three thousand pounds would not put the house into habitable repair, and that money had been raised upon it time after time by Major Talbot to pay his debts ; it was, in fact, mortgaged to more than its value, and house and land grew worse every year. The son found that those who had lent money on it were ready and willing at any moment to pull each other's ears, so he arranged for an annuity to be paid to his father, and returned to India, never to see Ireland again. The inheritance was worth nothing ; he renounced it, and the debts thereon ; saw his father at Venice on his way back, and congratulated himself at having washed his hands of the heirship to, and responsibility concerning, Castle Talbot, for he foresaw, that his father once dead, years of law and wrangling must follow, and if any

sale could be effected the property would go for "an old song."

The second son, in the Mauritius, troubled himself about nothing but his prospects there ; he also gave up all claim to Castle Talbot.

Scolding at Dora, and shrinking from observation, the old man wended his way towards the muddy Thames : his anger was so extreme, he felt he should like to come to blows with anybody, no matter who. He had money in his pocket, but he must guard and husband it ; and he turned sullenly from piles of dwelling-houses, the great unnatural world of brick, in the direction of the dark yet glistening river, dark with the refuse of London and the shadow of countless floating black sails, huge barges, penny steamers, and the multitude of craft to be seen near the old bridges.

"I will dine and die," he said.

He dined at an eating-house he knew, and washed down his dinner with good wine, then paid, and wandered with the stream towards Waterloo Bridge ; his eye, as digestion went on, became attracted by objects which surrounded him, and he grew more tranquillised. It was

the middle of the afternoon when London is full of wealth and activity,—industry everywhere prevails. He deviated from the crowded course, and rested himself in back streets and bye-ways, noticing women hard at work, tailoring, with brass thimbles and strong thread, sitting behind pots of sweet-scented mignonette, or gay nasturtiums or sweet peas ; in one window was a strawberry plant, carefully nursed and watered. Creepers ran up and hid bits of unsightly wall ; a few bright geraniums betokened better sort of folk, or those who had constant work ; in one place he saw a tea-cup gay with a patch of blue nemophilla—so strong is the love of flowers, and of the country, to indwellers of the great city. The very rain, laden with soot and dust from the roofs above, one would think would not refresh them, or the air coming from those stifling courts would be close and poisonous ; but nature delights to deceive ; the flowers thrive and spread their glad petals in the London sunshine, and acknowledge God's power, and no doubt yield their influence, and remind those hard workers of Him who careth

for the poor, the sick, and the needy, who put their trust in Him.

Major Talbot, I regret to say, did not think of this as his eyes mechanically took in the flowers, the houses, or the fifty other things that presented themselves, as he walked ; but the perfume or the sight of the unexpected verdure in such rough places may have struck upon his soul for all that, for he grew tamer and less inclined to die by his own hand.

“ It is too light now,” he said ; “ there are too many people about ; they would either prevent the fatal plunge, or fish me out, apply a stomach-pump to my mouth, hot water to my feet, and get an old woman to rasp me down with woollen things, and then the Humane Society would grant a medal to the man who saved me ; he would go home and write a tract, and a preacher would be sent to me to paint in lively colours and gestures of horror, my crime.”

He crossed the bridge, and resolved to think of it again, when his money was all gone, but it must be done in the night when only the

stars should be witnesses, not blundering gaping fools, or meddling policemen. He granted himself a reprieve of a day or two, and walked on content with his determination.

CHAPTER XVIII.

PARIS AGAIN !

DORA was a little shaken by her bad night, but her morning visitor completely *upset* her. I know ladies, whose nerves are quite unstrung, call it being "upset," and they generally like a cup of hot coffee at luncheon time, and some bread and butter instead of anything more solid, or more difficult to take, for eating and drinking is a trouble on some days ; and so Dora found it, though, like a sensible person, she did it ; and it was well that she did so fortify herself, for another shock awaited her—it came by the afternoon post, a very queer looking letter from Paris, the same being addressed by a groom of Major Farnham's who had not been considered a very creditable scholar at his parish school.

Dora tore open the envelope, and inside she read, written in pencil in George Farnham's hand, but as if the hand were that of a dying man,

"DORA,

"Come to me, Hôtel de la Grande Victoire.

"G. FARNHAM."

There was something to create sensation in her breast! such a summons must betoken death, and she must go; but it was against the grain to run the risk of meeting Lady Michella; however, she put all that aside, and thought only of George as Ethel's husband, and felt sure he must be in dismal woe to send her such an appeal, as "Dora, come to me." The words were few, but the hand that traced them was of a repentant man, she was convinced.

She summoned Miss Greystones to a council, and at first thought of a telegram, but the envelope, so badly directed, spoke of privacy; and what need to tell him she would go, he

would count the hours and know when she could reach him at the earliest.

"You should go at once," said Miss Greystones.

"Yes ; I suppose I cannot go without Batting ?"

"I fear not ; you must take her ; she will be quiet and useful."

"Then I had better take her into confidence," and Eliza was called, and preparations begun.

"I fear your papa is not well, Warnar ; he has sent for me. You will be happy for a few days with Miss Greystones, and I will return or write as soon as I can."

Dora arrived in Paris, husbanding her strength, sleeping in the railway-carriage, taking due refreshment, and resolute not to knock up. She drove at once to the Hôtel de la Grande Victoire, told the man at the Conciérge that she was the sister of the Colonel who was sick ; a waiter led the way to his chamber.

Dora entered softly, taking off her bonnet and holding it in her hand. Batting remained in the corridor. There lay George Farnham,

wasted and insensible. Tapers glimmered on a sort of temporary altar ; the vessel of holy oil, and a silver chalice were placed in proper order in front of a crucifix of ivory, with gems inlaid, rubies for spots of blood ; two Sisters of Charity were on their knees, a priest bore in his hand the consecrated wafer, incense had been burned in the sick chamber, and the air was laden with perfume ; another priest stood by the chimney-piece, evidently only as a friend ; by the pillow knelt an unmistakeable figure, Lady Michella. Dora took all this in at a glance, in less time than it has occupied to write,—so little time, that before any one could move, she had crossed the apartment, opened a window, and let in a stream of pure air. The sun was setting, and a red light also entered as she pushed aside the curtain ; purity and truth gained ground ; the priest shot a farewell glance towards the bed, and likewise towards his brother in religion, no word was needed ; in common parlance of the present day, they understood the case was “ no go.”

The lady rose from her knees and looked a little confounded as she confronted Dora. The

The butchers from Innescroft, years ago, took the meadow lands for grazing, but they were grazed out; and the sheds and barns, unroofed, had fallen into a damp mass of decayed matter, all vestige of timber having been drawn from beneath for firing by the peasantry.


Cloonededen, the adjacent village, was a disgrace and a stain; so foul a spot as it was, had no right to fester in the sunshine; the few houses standing were mean and dingy; wood-work rotting, doors and windows broken, pools of water in front, in which a few ducks or geese gabbled and cackled, or plumed themselves upon heaps of rubbish, which had been the thatch of a cottage. Law-suits without end had risen, because the boundaries were broken down, fences had disappeared, or ditches got filled up; sheep or horses were impounded for trespassing, neighbour quarrelled with neighbour; there was no one to apply to. Major Talbot was abroad; the agent would write, and after frequent stirring up, and much delay, he did write, and obtained in some weeks one of those long-winded epistles which

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restore him. She had never cared so much about him as now : the scene of last night had produced a deep impression, the altar, the lights, the kneeling women, the awful face of the sick man, she could not efface from her brain. All fear of meeting Lady Michella was gone ; she was glad she had come, and determined to sleep, and so strengthen herself, to guard George from further annoyance the next day.

Daylight was beginning to break over vast tracks of country, over hill and valley, ancient woods and clustering chesnut trees, over palaces and churches, thatched cottages and green fields, the uncertain light feeling its way through painted windows into ancient chapels and lofty churches, stealing along the aisles, passing shrines of favourite saints, or statues of martyrs long forgotten, up to the vaulted roof, bringing out the beauties of the architecture, and showing each receding arch. Such, in magnificent cathedrals,—bringing out in ruins touches to enchant the artist, playing on mouldering abbey or Gothic specimens of art, worthy a journey of a hundred leagues to see.

The first break of dawn comes with peculiar freshness to a great city ; the air is cold, life suspended, breathing slowly, it would seem—none but the watchers quite awake—the moon, still shining, has not removed her light from the sky, and it blends with the soft twilight. Not a sound disturbs the melancholy of the streets, they look solitary and long, the squares deserted ; in a short time the chif-foniers will come out and chatter, and the noisy road-scraping and innumerable waggons begin the never-ending noise till the following midnight comes again with the short repose the last enjoyed. Before even the noisy cocks had begun to crow, or the stones of Paris to echo human footsteps, Dora slept for a short hour soundly, but was aroused by one of the Sisters of Charity.

“ Oh come, madame ! for the Holy Virgin’s sake, be quick, or it will be too late ! ” and she vanished.

In an instant Dora followed to the sick room. George Farnham was sitting up in bed, muttering, his eyes fixed and his head swollen, one of the sisters held his two hands,

the other was fumbling about his neck. He saw the two women as a man sees visions or shadows on the wall ; he had sought to rid himself of the weight of life, to snap the silver cord which wearied him, and so he tried to shake the remnants and hurry on the end.

Dora untied the handkerchief from his throat, a gurgle followed, and life returned. She supported his head for some minutes, and bade the woman loose his hands. They were frightened, and Dora could hear their hearts throb thud, thud, thud, against their ribs ; she motioned them to leave the bed ; her next impulse was to rush through the deserted streets and summon Dr. Foote, but she dared not leave the patient. His eyes were yet wide open and his face livid and ghastly. Dora felt for the pillows and propped them under him, then reached a basin and splashed water over his head, and left a towel saturated with cold lotion on it.

In half an hour the lips resumed their form, and the eyes closed of their own accord ; Dora poured into his mouth a stimulating draught, and bathed the poor hands and face with clear

cool water. All this time she had not spoken ; his brain had been too engaged to bear it. The Sisters of Charity had left the room, probably to exchange with others for the coming day. An hour passed, Dora alone with the sick man. Batting was not yet awake.

It was broad daylight now, without, but the blinds were closed in that chamber, the night-light not yet extinguished ; disorder reigned throughout the room : a chair had been overturned in the scuffle to release the intended self-murderer ; the table, which had formed the altar, stood by, and all the candlesticks were there, and a vase or two ; Dora had thrown out the flowers ; the napkin on which had stood the paten and chalice was all awry, drawn so when the priest carried away the ivory crucifix. Michella's kneeling-stool was overturned likewise, emblem of her power ; perhaps Dora thought so too, for she raised it and put it as far away as she could, silently, but a silent mover in a sick room often proves a solace. As she put some few things into order, she could see that his eyes were following her, and that more consciousness had come into them ; she

waited yet a little, and then, bending over him, said,—

“George.”

She never called him George before, but all the old time had passed away ; she had never been sent for before to nurse him.

He made an ill-directed effort towards her hand—she knew that she was recognised, and took his.

The clocks struck the hours—the pavements resounded with clatter of all kinds : a rapid current is the only simile for the stream of people who hurried past the Hôtel de la Grande Victoire ; besides the carriages, horses, carts, and so forth, cries and sounds of all kinds fell heavily in that chamber, and did not awake a sleeper or disturb a watcher who held the sleeper’s hand. It was half-past nine when Batting came in, whispering,—

“Goodness gracious, Miss Dora ! where are the nurses ? And you ? how long have you been here ? How did I come to oversleep myself ? I had no notion it was so late. Where will you have breakfast, miss ?”

“Here,” said Dora.

And shortly, Batting came again, a garçon bearing a tray with coffee, rolls, and butter, and Dora ate her breakfast by the bedside.

Dr. Foote treated the patient skilfully, and looked to Dora to have his orders carried out ; she feared it might not be easy, and desired that a nurse should be sent who would act under him ; the Sisters of Charity did not return or send others of the sisterhood.

In the course of the day a woman arrived with credentials from Dr. Foote, and was duly invested with authority by Dora.

Towards evening she congratulated herself that the day had gone so well, the apartment had been "tidied up," and all things looked more comfortable. Batting had written to Miss Greystones, for Dora's hand would have been too tremulous, and she was sitting in a large chair gazing at George, but in a state of calm repose, when a hand touched her shoulder—she saw it, a white beautiful hand too, with handsome rings, emerald, diamond, and ruby. Dora did not shrink from the touch or rise from the chair ; she knew it was Lady Michella, but she did not dread her now, and so great a

charity had grown up in her soul, since George's life was spared, that she even did not hate her.

If George had died of the brain fever, or in the state of temporary insanity caused by his anguish, no doubt Dora, with all the world, would have judged this woman, and harshly ; but hope had changed all that. Charity, as before said, reigned ; she could forgive.

"May I speak to you ?" said Lady Michella.

"Not here, it would disturb him."

Lady Michella looked towards the door by which she had entered, but, somehow, Dora did not wish to go to her apartments, she sat still.

"I will not keep you long," said the lady, almost humbly.

Dora signed to the nurse to be watchful and led the way to her own room.

"It is good of you to bring me *here*. I do not deserve it, but I will never trouble you again. I cannot ask you to do more than you have done, but yet I cannot leave Paris quite misunderstood."

Dora waited ; she had nothing to say. Lady

Michella did not fling herself at her feet or express any extraordinary agony of mind ; she looked very handsome, more subdued than Dora had thought she could be, and, after a few seconds, she said,—

“ In your eyes I know I am odious, and I think you are larger hearted than most people not to betray your feelings—you were very cool last night, and I am sure you are sincere. You have never heard much, I dare say, about my religion and the glory which is attached to one who has gained a convert to our Church—we are promised immense reward.”

She turned from Dora and continued,

“ You know that I am married, for you lived in our house in Ireland and heard that my husband is a Protestant. I must make myself understood ; it concerns my salvation to bring him over to the Church of Rome, but his principles are very firm, and I found greater difficulties than any of us anticipated ; for, of course, my advisers in the Church, and also my father, Lord Andingdron, expected that I should speedily work his conversion. I made no progress, and at Rome made a confession

upon that subject to a priest much thought of in our religion. He advised that the case might be wrought out by means of a friend, and my husband was just then very much pleased with Colonel Farnham, so he was selected for our experiment.

“Have you heard that with good Catholics the end justifies the means, if the end is an important one; and I confess to you, Miss Handon, that I was in the meshes of my advisers, who laid their plans for the gaining of two souls over to Rome—*two prizes* they hoped, for both men have wealth. In this way my name, and that of Colonel Farnham, became *talked* of;—the holy father hoped to drive him to conditions. Colonel Farnham left Rome, and I was made to follow; we met, Miss Handon, only in public; from place to place I followed, acting upon advice. My husband was angry and went away. I was forbidden to write to him, and told the safer path was to let him alone; he was sure to follow as soon as Colonel Farnham was gained over. One of the priests promised to write and comfort him, and say that I was acting

under orders of a Superior. I am sure my husband, who accords me every liberty in religion, will forgive the means taken to induce his friend to join in the true faith."

"I hope," said Dora, "it may not be too late. I think Mr. Enwarry will find this very hard to bear and to believe."

"I wish he had not *had* to bear it; I would rather have thrown off the trammels of the Church years ago, but I got such hard penances when I said so, that I believe the father-confessor at the convent spoke of it to my father, for I have never been free of a sort of espionage—can you understand this? Your brother-in-law has hidden himself for a fortnight together sometimes; and ever since he came to Paris has been unwell. They told me he had retired from the world for a time previously to declaring himself."

"Did you not see him lately, then?"

"Never alone. Two or three times within the last month he said something about his children, and I believed from Father Paul that he would gain them too; he talked about deserting them being too hard to bear."

"Poor man," said Dora, "he is very ill."

"The brain-fever came on suddenly ; I had not been in his room till last night, when they came to ask me to assist at the extreme unction, and, before it could be administered, you came in."

"Yes," said Dora, quietly.

"To-day I am advised to give up the attempt and to go back to Rome, but I could not go without explaining all this to you."

"Thank you." Dora spoke coldly, but she felt the obligation nevertheless ; it threw a new light upon matters, this explanation. Was it possible that such could be the end of all ? that it was an attempt to gain Mr. Enwarry by means of his friend !

It was monstrous ! incredible ! Had they been boys, Dora said to herself, there might have been an excuse for so unlikely a trial of skill ; it seemed impossible for human nature to believe ; but the priests urged each other on, saying that so galling to Colonel Farnham would be the idea of ignominy connected with his name, that he would give in. They had less hope of Mr. Enwarry for some reason best

known to themselves, and they left him alone, without the comfort which they promised his wife they would give him, namely, that she was performing a part assigned to her. Dora sank down on the bed, she could stand no longer. Lady Michella saw she was in a state of perturbation.

"I hope Colonel Farnham will soon be better ; I assure you I had no idea he was so ill ; they told me his mind was much distressed, but they accounted for it to me by saying his family were against the change."

"But he will never change," Dora said.

"No, so we perceive ; it has been lost labour. Have I made you understand that I am going away to-morrow, and shall not trouble you any more ?"

"Yes, thanks."

"And believe that I have told you all ?"

"I will. I do."

"I cannot think you doubt me ; they say injurious reports have been spread, but they will die out. I promise you this is my last attempt at gaining a proselyte ; I have felt the awkwardness more than once ; even my hus-

band shall be free to do as he pleases, but my father made it so solemn a request that I would try to bring over Geoffrey, that I believe I fell into a sort of ecclesiastical snare."

Dora stood up, and said in a strong voice,—

"I am glad you came to me before you left : in my eyes your conduct is very wrong, quite unjustifiable ; you can bear the truth,—even your good name has been imperilled by this affair, and Colonel Farnham's family have felt disgraced. If your Church has to answer for all this misery, thank God I do not belong to it."

"I have been very blind, Miss Handon. I see more plainly now, but I believe I have been sinned against. I have only sinned in obeying orders ; you give me credit for what I tell you. I shall make no further confession, except to Geoffrey, when I can find out where he is ; surely he will not be angry ; but it is all a strange case. Farewell, Miss Handon."

She bowed her beautiful head, and gave Dora her lovely hand, without emotion outwardly, and left her.

Dora looked into the sick room, and seeing

all went on well, returned to her own, took out her little travelling-desk and wrote to Mr. Enwarry. She had never seen him, but instinct told her he would be glad to get her letter—and from a woman, too, who could in a few words, with tact, express more than volumes would explain. It was right for him to know that his wife was going back to Rome, but that she, Dora, was at the Hôtel de la Grande Victoire, to nurse her brother-in-law, and there she met Lady Michella ; the excuse made for her note was some half-quarter's rent : Mr. Enwarry would see through the medium. She did not know where he was, but, at a venture, addressed the letter to Enwarry Lodge, saying to herself, it will be forwarded, and can only give peace.

CHAPTER XIX.

NEVER FORSAKEN.

DORA sent Batting to post the letter. She thought "the sooner it is known that we have come to amicable terms, the better." Batting was puzzled. Lady Michella had been with her mistress in her own room, and now Miss Dora had written to Mr. Enwarry ; besides, Colonel Farnham had sent for Miss Handon to come and nurse him through brain-fever. She argued, there could not be much wrong, so she held her head proudly, and posted her letter with extreme satisfaction, as if the fortunes of the family she served, were looking up again.

Dora dined, and returned to the bedside of her brother ; the summer heat, as evening came on, was subdued to mellowness, and the

recollection of Claydon Eaves at this season last year came before her.

The stately woods and ancestral park, the balmy air, yet so invigorating, the varied hues of the foliage, the glowing colours of the flowers, the rich fields she had seen through eyes all dimmed with sorrow, and the fine old mansion with its comforts and quaint grandeur ;—as she thought, a sigh escaped her lips ; she saw the old house with the shutters closed and blinds drawn down, and then remembered this was the anniversary of Golden Pippin's death, her baby-friend and *his*. Her soft, persuasive, gentle, little voice, sad when she spoke of *him*, and hopeful when she talked of Heaven ; her eloquent eyes and devotion to herself and her grandfather, made Dora sit and weep as she recalled them. Dear little Golden Pippin ! no one had sorrowed with her at *his* departure as she had done, no grown-up person had grown so full of sympathy as she—no one could understand Dora's solitary misery after he left, as that little child had done.

But he had written that he was coming

home! Perhaps he had been more successful than he expected in arranging affairs for his nephews; perhaps he found he was not wanted, or else he was coming back to ask Dora to join him in some bold experiment. She would hear something of him in less than a month; to-morrow she would not fail to send a letter to the agent's office he had mentioned.

"No, Golden Pippin, not yet; wait, my child."

The delirium was returning.

"Take this card to Mr. Arthur, and request him to join me instantly," the sick man shouted; "and this sword must be cleaned; take it, I tell you!"

Then he raved about regimental people, and in a loud voice issued orders and commands; then his tones faltered, and he muttered words about "poor Ethel," and his mind wandered about happy times. His brain was much affected; low in body, he was strong, nevertheless, in the fever state, and the nurse was very judicious in her soothings. Then his children again, and most of all Golden Pippin;

he was guarding her from some intended injury, and threatening vengeance on the offenders.

Dora sent for the English groom, who might be useful if he became more violent.

"He is always talking about something golden, miss ; before you came he used to be terrible."

"Hush ! do not speak, he will be quieter soon ;" but quiet was a long time coming ; exhaustion produced it at last, and towards midnight he opened his eyes, and said to Dora,

"Send them all away."

She did so.

"Before I die, thank you for coming. God will reward you for your goodness to my children."

"They are quite well," said Dora, wishing to comfort him.

"Only my Golden Pippin," he sighed.

"She is in Heaven a year to-day," said Dora.

"Miss Handon, Dora, you did not forsake me."

"I will stay till you are better."

"My God, forsake me not, and look upon me with mercy. I am a sinner, but not such a sinner as to——"

"I know all about it," Dora said ; "try to sleep, and may God bless you."

"Amen," he feebly said.

Dr. Foote looked in, and feared he might not live through the night ; his lips were livid, his skin moist and clammy. They gave wine at intervals, and such restoratives as nature could bear : he was alive next morning, that was all. About nine he got a little sleep, and Dora despatched Batting for Mr. Howard, who administered the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and read the prayer for a person at the point of departure. George Farnham was lying very still ; then his face changed, and the nurse begged Dora to turn away, but in a few minutes a smile broke over the calm features, and he said,

"Dora, I have seen Ethel and Golden Pippin ; I am content ; my sins have fallen off me ;" he fell into a quiet slumber, and the clergyman said, "Saved, I believe."

Dora did not ask whether he meant soul or body ; he went away, and she sat down to enjoin perfect quiet for the weak man whose life yet hung so slightly between this world and the next, that a sudden noise might break the slender thread.

In an hour or two Batting insisted on her eating breakfast ; good, watchful Batting. At mid-day she put a card into her hand.

“ Sir Bishop Lombard.”

“ I can see no one, Batting,” she said.

“ Oh, but, Miss Dora, this is the dark gentleman who gave the children toys at Croydon, and I did not know then he was Mrs. Broom’s nephew. How should I ? ”

Dora did not think this was the same, but walked into the salon, and found him of the Panama hat. He took off his spectacles as he saluted her, and smiled at her surprise.

“ You have changed your name,” she said.

“ Yes, two years ago ; I am Lombard now, and a baronet, but your devoted servant still. My aunt’s letter informed me that you were in Paris ; I have had difficulty in making out your hotel ; but I hear you are lonely now.”

"Colonel Farnham is sleeping, and I think will recover."

"I thought he could not live an hour last night, so Dr. Foote told me."

"Yes, he thought so, but I am thankful to say he was mistaken. My nieces are in London."

"Yes, I have seen them ; I called at Lady Meath's, and found them, instead of her ladyship or you."

"You are lately come home ?"

"I left Persia in May, but I will not tell you of my travels now. I want to serve you ; how can I do it ?"

Dora could not blind herself to the fact that Sir Bishop had fine expressive eyes, when those disfiguring spectacles were off.

"You are very good," she said ; "I believe no one can do anything for me."

"I shall wait, and watch for an opportunity. Do Lady Meath and others know you are here ?"

"I think not, it is better so ; I would not go out or see them here. Colonel Farnham is so very ill at present."

"Could you not drive out?"

"No, it would be quite too much. I have scarcely slept since I left London."

"Poor girl!" he said, to himself. Aloud he said,

"You have shown a strong mind, and a true woman's spirit in coming, Miss Handon."

"My brother-in-law sent for me."

"Did he? You were right to come; at any rate, it has satisfied the world."

"I did not come for that," said honest Dora.

"But you came with confidence that all was well, or he could not have written for you."

"I did not think about it; he wrote only a few words in pencil, by which I guessed he must be very ill."

"It was a noble thing for you to do."

"I see nothing noble in it," said Dora.

"Is it not a noble thing to restore peace into families by a little sacrifice of self?"

"I have made no sacrifice."

"I will not intrude longer now; my residence in Paris is always at your pleasure, so command me in any way—do not hesitate. I

am called odd, eccentric; but let me serve you ; I will only ask that to-day."

Dora shook hands, and Sir Bishop Lombard took up his Panama and green umbrella, and went away, with a bow almost as low as ever.

Dr. Foote was surprised to find a patient living, whose minutes appeared to be fast ebbing away the night before.

"We must be very cautious," he said, "and keep up the system without endangering a relapse, which must be fatal." He gave the most stringent rules and orders, the attendants were obedient to the very letter, and the day passed and also the night, and the lamp of life still burned, feebly it is true, and the nurse expected an expiring flash, and then darkness ; but Dora believed Colonel Farnham had so fine a constitution, that she began to hope he would "pull through." He had never been pulled down with serious illness before, had lost no limb, nor met with serious accidents in battle or the hunting field ; this all augured well.

The next day passed, and she had yet more hope, and wrote to Miss Greystones a full, thick

letter, for which Batting reproached her, as she looked tired after it, "besides having double postage" to pay, which was a crime in her eyes.

On the day following Batting said,

"Miss Dora, Sir Bishop says he must see you for a few minutes. I told him you wished to be alone, and could see nobody."

She went to the salon, and he approached her with respect.

"You will forgive my intrusion, when I present a letter from *ma tante*; she congratulates me upon having found you, and sends me addresses you may require. Is there any thing I can do? tell me, it will give me pleasure such as nothing else can give. Have you no business I can transact for you?"

"Nothing, thank you, unless you can send me some English papers; there is one bit of intelligence I wish to find out."

"The 'Court Journal'?"

"No, not that."

"The 'Morning Post'?"

"I scarcely think anything but the 'Times' would have it."

"Or 'Galignani'?"

"No, I think not."

"Perhaps I might know whether it is naval or military, foreign or domestic?"

"Foreign, I suppose; relating to shipping," said Dora. He went away and brought back a pile of papers, Dora looked in one "Times," then another, and cast them all aside.

"It is too bad to give you so much trouble," she said.

"Give me more."

"I scarcely know how."

"Let me make enquiries for you."

"I cannot," she said.

So he thought she might after all have been seeking to discover Lady Michella's movements, and she might expect to find something under the head of Fashionable Intelligence.

"Do you know anything of Lady Michella?" he asked.

"Lady Michella Enwarry? yes, she was here, I saw her; she is gone to Rome."

"That is unlikely, at this season; it is too hot for such a place. She is still in Paris."

"You surprise me!"

"They say she is waiting for her husband."

"I wonder they do not advise her to go to him," said Dora, with a shade of bitterness.

"She is strangely warped by her spiritual task-masters," said Sir Bishop.

"She told me some of their peculiarities," Dora said.

"And did you listen to her patiently?"

"I was glad to hear all she said."

"Miss Handon, Dora! your great heart delights me; I bow to it in submissive homage—do not be too matter of fact to listen to my devotion——"

"I cannot listen," said Dora.

"My patience *can* endure, do not dismiss me; I may bring the 'Times' to-morrow."

"Or send it."

CHAPTER XX.

RESCUED.

GOADED to desperation, almost to madness, Lady Michella found the friend, in whom she had placed implicit confidence, was false. Father Paul had never written to Geoffrey and did not know where he was ; he counselled her to return to Rome, but she refused. She trembled now at the thought of Geoffrey's suffering ; she paced her room and vowed that she would throw off allegiance to Rome and its fetters ! Life, freedom, happiness, all are ruined by this mistaken zeal ! She declared that she had been unjustly persecuted, that she was a martyr ! that the Church had only wrought strife and dissension, that she would not be a prisoner longer ; she insisted upon absolution. Her rebellious manner alarmed her attendant priest, and he whispered that she was in no fit

state for absolution, or any other rite; she must allay her agitation, and by fasting and many prayers, become worthy.

His power was crumbling, and he saw it; he had over-stepped, and must draw back.

“Renounce these heretical opinions,” he said.

She quailed again under the lash, and said, “I am bound to confess that I have spoken hastily, but it astounds me to hear that my husband is not aware of our proceedings.”

“Our proceedings have failed.”

“Nevertheless, he ought to have known: where can he be?”

The priest-friend sat by the table, and began to read out of a book with fine gold clasps; the lady walked up and down the room in silence; the priest-friend read on; he was a fine, handsome man, bald, with an eye full, eloquent, and dark—an eye of great power. At last he closed and clasped his volume.

“You will set out for Rome to-morrow?”

“Do not ask it.”

“You promised to go three days since.”

“I could not.”

“You will start to-morrow?”

"I will not," she said.

And she brought down upon her devoted head an anathema, which was terrible to her ears, conversant enough with Latin to understand its dreadful import. The priest-friend's temper had been tried, he let out his wrath in vindictive curses upon the woman who had failed in a monster speculation.

He left her, drawing up his shoulders level with his ears ; she knew he would not come back ; she could carry out any plan she now made, and had no longer any compunction in choosing one.

"I will go home," she said, "to Ireland ; I will send for Geoffrey and tell him all, he will not disbelieve me. Superstition and unbounded confidence in the Church ! and I am thought so full of frivolity and levity, light-hearted ! alas, I am not so now. Geoffrey will see things as others do, perhaps ; then I am lost indeed."

She summoned her two attendants and ordered instant preparation to be made, and before the priest had said his prayers next morning she had set off towards her home.

CHAPTER XXI.

HOPE DEFERRED.

DORA could not leave ; but the month was fast approaching when she hoped to hear something of Melville, and she half expected to see amongst “ Vessels spoken with,” the name of the ship in which *he* had said he should embark.

Sir Bishop Lombard having traversed the Deserts of Arabia, visited the sites of Nineveh and Babylon, walked down the crowded streets of Jeddo, and gazed on the inhabitants of Timbuctoo, had since seen the ruins of Delhi—in fact, the known world was his intimate acquaintance ; he had fallen into a state of disgust for further travel, and found that his property at home required his presence. He only feared that he made but little progress in

Dora's good graces, which was the object of his present solicitude.

Lady Meath, with whom he was a great favourite, sent her card to Dora when she heard she was in Paris, but her niece could not leave the hotel. Charlie insisted on an interview one day, and cheered her as he always did.

"Well, my fair cousin, your invalid progresses in the right direction, I am told ; come out and see my lady mother."

"I do not like to leave yet. I am not wanted to nurse, but I can see that rules are carried out."

"Rules? are they then, as stringent in your hotel as in that at the diggings at Reese River, where it is written up at the bar, 'Lodgers to rise at five, to feed at six, each man to make his own bed. No quartz taken in payment. No fighting allowed at table. Any one violating these rules will be shot.'"

"Not quite so sudden a termination," said Dora, smiling.

"Come in the evening if you cannot get out all day."

"Not yet, I will be sure to let you know when I can, and shall be very glad."

"I suppose Colonel Farnham will throw his commission to the winds?" said Charles.

"I cannot tell. When he is better we must get him home to his father's house."

"Truly said, my cousin, he is hardly fit for active service yet, and rumour whispers that he has had his head shaved, so his reappearance in society must be postponed, he would hardly do for a Military Ball."

Charlie rattled off nonsense and good sense, happily mingled, and when he left he had done his cousin a service, for she got him to write to the agents about the time the expected ship might arrive, and to request a reply to the Hôtel de la Grande Victoire, which she told herself would ease Melville's mind, in case he should get to London before she did.

Colonel Farnham "held his own;" that is, if he did not gain strength he did not retrograde. At length he made a decided rally, and could take the restoratives prescribed, and then daily made progress, and Dora wrote hopefully to

Warna and Adelaïs. And yet she refused to go out.

She did not sit much in the sick room, but busied herself in her private sitting-room with books and work, the richest embroideries and most difficult patterns only employed her. Batting was her emissary to fancy shops, and brought her the materials, not that Dora cared for work in itself, but she must now employ her time. Exquisite flowers were in her apartments growing in pots. Sir Bishop Lombard arranged this, he knew she would refuse his bouquets, but these seemed to belong to the hotel, so he felt she had an almost daily change, and constant pleasure in the variety. It was an instance of true and beautiful delicacy.

Two or three times each day she would visit her brother-in-law, and as gradually he grew better he became anxious.

"Are the children at Claydon Eaves?" he asked.

"No, they are in Lady Meath's house in London, she herself proposed it shortly before you were ill."

"Where before that?"

"After we left Ireland, we came to Paris."

He started. "Did you know I was here?"

"Yes," answered Dora.

"And you left to avoid me?"

"Yes."

"Did the girls know?"

"No."

"Thank you, Dora. I was ill and miserable for weeks, my wandering mind assured me——."

"Do not talk, George; I understand all."

"How is little Charles?"

"Well and growing tall, he is a fine boy."

"And Hector?"

"You may be proud of him, he is reading steadily, and hopes eventually to take a good degree at Cambridge; I tell him Newmarket is too near, that he will ride and hunt, and be plucked for his 'little go.'"

"And what did he reply?" asked his father, smiling.

"He said 'Oh, Aunt Dora, never mind, I shall have a shy at it.'"

"So he will; Hector will be a good fellow."

"Your father is very fond of him, and proud too ; he is a splendid rider."

"That he is."

"He spends all holiday time at Claydon Eaves ; it is very good for his health, and when college time comes I have no fear."

"I am glad you tell me my father is so well, my extension of leave is nearly over, and the regiment goes to India ; I expect I shall have to join at Marseilles, and not have time to go home."

"I thought——," began Dora.

"Miss Dora, a lady and gentleman want to see you," said Batting, interrupting.

Dora found Gertrude and Sir Bishop, they had sent her a blank card, with penciled "your cousins."

"I bring the papers, Dora," said Gertrude, "and an invitation from Lady Meath to come and take up your abode with us. Colonel Farnham is, I hear, so well that you can leave him to go home to his girls in South Dudley Terrace, and do come to us."

Dora shook her head ; and Sir Bishop Lombard began to talk to Gertrude, giving her

time very quietly to open the "Times," not in a comfortable wide open manner, but just in a casual sort of way, as one amuses a spare moment by looking over the advertisements. Not amongst the advertisements—not amongst the Naval and Military, or any every day intelligence—her eye ran over a few words only in the centre of the sheet as she held it up, the rest still lying on the table; it was so raised that her face was hidden—she saw "Wreck of the Queen of Wangoa." Her heart turned to ice, her hands to stone; fixed, she still held up the paper, her head remained erect, her mouth was partly open, the breath cold as it passed her lips, her hand did not tremble, the small pretty hand with its tiny rings, and the wrist encircled by a plain cambric cuff over the tight black silk sleeve.

Bishop noticed it all; he kept Gertrude's head towards himself, and kept her chattering; he must have known of Dora's case, for he helped her to hide her grief. At last, Gertrude said,—

"Come, Sir Bishop, we must go. Miss Haddon is deep in the leading article. When will

you come ? Shall I tell Lady Meath to-morrow ? ”

“ To-morrow,” Dora repeated. She roused herself, and gave her hand ; it was cold as death ; her eyes were hollow, her features frozen. Gertrude, full of happiness herself, did not observe the change ; but Bishop knew that Dora felt more lonely than ever. He gave one penetrating glance and left her ; he saw she could speak no more then.

She could not speak to George again that day. Batting perceived that something was wrong.

“ Over-watching will be the death of you, Miss Dora ; you are not so strong as you think. Come, you must lie down and rest, I will see that nurse attends to master ; now, do be ruled, come and lie down.”

Without a word, she submitted—chilled, prostrate beneath the terrible calamity, the onerous fate. She would not read details, nor did she even know whether there were any, or whether what she saw was only a short telegram. “ Wreck of the Queen of Wangoa,” was

enough. Four hours she lay as if a wintry wind blew over her. Batting grew frightened, and administered hot drinks, or tried to do so, but with very poor success. Dora did not complain of ache or pain; but she kept her maid in some anxiety for several days, and kept her bed, too, for Batting assured Dr. Foote she had taken cold, and was overtired. It needed yet one drop more to fill her cup of agony—a letter came :—

“Messrs. Thomas and Adkin beg to inform Miss Handon, in reply to the letter of ——— ultimo, that the vessel expected on or about the 23rd of this month, foundered at sea; all hands lost. She is supposed to have gone down in lat. ———. The Queen of Wangoa was a magnificent ship, 2000 tons, &c., &c.”

Dora started convulsively, as she read these fatal lines, then she fell back and only said, “A total wreck!” and sank back on her pillow.

It was true; the papers gave few particulars.

The Queen of Wangoa had been totally lost, and all hands perished.

The blow was too heavy. Life and hope had sustained her. Dora was mentally strong; she had tried to trust, and believed all things were for the best. She knew whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth; she had bowed and been patient; now she could hold out no longer, but, powerless, bent beneath the weight of her misery.

For awhile she writhed in her great sorrow, and then, the ice half-melting, a paroxysm of woe was on her, too deep for words; but in that stage she trembled, and her eyes were haggard, and her nose was sharp, her face angular; no tears came, but a few despairing sobs shook her, from the very depth of her heart-breaking.

She hid her letter, and felt as if the tomb had closed over her, and as if she would henceforth be as a monument—a something sculptured only to encumber the earth till it could mingle with the dust in after-ages; so seemed the rest of her life—an eternity of sorrow.

Dr. Foote came ; she had to see him. He said,—“I do not feel easy at having to leave Colonel Farnham, Miss Handon ; but I have a daughter married, she has also several children, and is now at Nice with a lung disease ; her husband has written to me, begging I will try my skill, for her life is in danger, in fact, she is spitting blood ; I have acquainted my other patients, and they are willing to allow me to leave them. How are you to-day ? You look worn out ; do not be too anxious about your patient, I believe he will master the complaint. I hope to return in ten days or a fortnight, at most.”

Dora could not keep him from his poor daughter ; she said so, and that she was going to get up, which reassured him that she felt better.

The doctor left, and the nurse was either tired of her job, or really had a husband, as she said, who had met with an accident ; she had to go, and a new one to be installed ; the new one did not please, and a third had to be sought. It was too much for Dora ; her mind struggled for many days, and finally the body

gave way beneath it. She did not rave—her command was very great over her lips—but a vacant look showed there was something blank within ; and Batting, assuring all that she was worn out, and only wanted rest, let her alone as long as she could.

Batting aroused her one evening.

“You must try to get up, Miss Dora. Oh, how I wish Dr. Foote had never gone. Five weeks in Paris has done for you, Miss Dora ; and I really don’t like the new doctor for master.”

“New doctor ?” said Dora, weakly, trying to get into her dress.

“Yes, Miss Dora, whether he missed you, or whether he had a relapse of the fever, I cannot say ; but master was very ill three days ago, and nurse instead of waiting for Dr. Hammond, ran for a stranger, who, thinking it some sudden case, I suppose, bled master till he fainted—Dr. Hammond was very angry, when he came.”

“Bled him !” said Dora, “what madness !”

Now by this time she had steadied herself and dressed, for she was sure something was

wrong by Batting's manner. She found her brother-in-law sitting in an easy-chair, his cheeks flaccid, looking at empty space, his mouth drooped—he smiled at her.

“You are not gone, Dora,” he said, feebly.

“I told you I would not leave you ; I have been ill.”

“Poor lonely Dora !”

His words struck like a knell upon her heart.

“George, I will not leave you again.”

“Thanks, I am better to-night.”

“Have you pain ?”

“None ; no pain, and no fear.”

Something flashed across her, she looked at him, his face was smooth and young again, but without colour, and his brow had lost its wrinkles, his expression was very calm.

He wiped his forehead from time to time, but seemed weaker than before.

“Do you like the chair better than bed ?”

“Yes, Dora, I breathe better.”

There was a time of silence, then once more he said,

“Poor lonely Dora !”

“Do not say that.”

He looked at her, the bitter anguish of her tone surprised him, he held out his poor hand, she took it and held it between both her own.

“God bless you and my children: it is over, all sorrow for ever——.” He was gone.

Dora kissed his hand—he was Ethel’s George.

“Thank God, Ethel and the girls were spared this,” she said, as Eliza Batting drew her away from another death chamber, and then one fainting fit succeeded another, and Batting at her wits’ end, sent for Sir Bishop “Broom,” as she in her agitation directed her note ; she knew he would know what to do about the funeral, and all the dreadful business now to be transacted.

He came quite early the next morning. Dora was incapable of anything ; quite broken down ; useless for the first time in her life.

Sir Bishop Lombard wrote all the needful letters, made suitable arrangements for the body of Colonel Farnham to be sent to Claydon Eaves where it was duly deposited in the

family vault, settled with the landlord of the Hôtel de la Grande Victoire, and finally told Batting he must see her mistress, as all was done.

Dora could not rise from the sofa, she thanked him for his goodness, and was sorry for the trouble he had had, she hoped soon to give no more.

"Miss Handon, let me do yet more for you."

"No one can."

"Do not say that, your brother-in-law's children are provided for, as regards them you are free ; let me have the right to do yet more——."

"No one can do anything."

"I cannot hear you say so."

She handed him the letter about the "Queen of Wangoa."

He read but did not seem to understand, so she in her honest way, gave him next the letter from New Zealand ; that he read also, and she said,—

"Now, you know all."

"I do, and will wait still. Death is not a gloomy angel, and Providence is by his side,

whether here or in the waters off New Zealand—you have been too long alone, Dora ; let me claim you.”

“I cannot look for happiness. I have had too much sorrow. I accept it as God’s will, but I could not exert myself to please you now.”

“I want no exertion, Dora.”

“You have been very kind for years to me. Let me say one thing. In a short time Warna Farnham will suit you better, she is a fine character.”

“I have waited very long for *you*, Dora.”

But poor Dora fainted again, she could make no effort now without—she was not fit to travel, so was removed to the Rue de la Paix, and Gertrude tended her and acted as a sister.

CHAPTER XXII.

IN THE ODOUR OF SANCTITY.

LADY MICHELLA, her maid and courier arrived at Naghan and proceeded by rail to Enwarry. The old care-taker received her coldly, and called her "Madam," holding the gates barely open.

"I am come home to remain," said the lady; "get my room ready at once. Is there a fire anywhere?"

"Only in master's study."

Lady Michella brushed quickly past, and gaining the study-door opened it hastily, and gave a somewhat loud exclamation for a woman of fashion.

There sat Geoffrey, pale and ill, in the last stage of rapid consumption. She did not know he was in the house, and was shocked beyond

measure at his wasted form. Her pride merged into contrition now, she fell at his feet on her knees,—

“Oh, Geoffrey! do not say I brought you to this.”

He gave her his hand and a calm smile; he had received Dora's letter.

“Geoffrey, forgive! Believe me, though culpable in no small degree, I never knew you were ill! Oh wretched mistake! oh fatal error! can you forgive? Oh Geoffrey, let me expiate my many faults by saving you. Oh, wicked Father Paul! he never told me you were here, or sick, or anything.”

Geoffrey was overcome with the excitement, and a blood-vessel in the lungs gave way, and then Lady Michella was in absolute despair—so dire a misfortune had never entered her head—she had been very much to blame, but here was punishment too terrible to bear, all the consolations talked of by her priest-friends, were futile here; she had come back and Geoffrey was dying.

Hers was not mute despair, she railed at being separated from him; for now a doctor

was called in, she railed at everything and at everyone.

"Life is too terrible to bear," she said, and her eyes, forgetting all about their beauty, ran out tears as if she were only a wretched wife, and not Lady Michella at all; her face was red and swollen with crying, her dress all in disorder, as she asked the doctor,

"Have I killed him? Oh say I did not kill him!"

"Mr. Enwarry must see no one for some days."

"Then he is not dead?"

"No, my lady."

"May I not nurse him?"

"Your ladyship had better not."

"You think I am too impetuous? I will be very quiet, only let me go and see him."

"It would be dangerous."

"Oh! do not let him die, the grave yawns for him, I know; do save him, good, kind, doctor."

"Mr. Enwarry may live some years with care."

"Oh, may he? here?"

"Italy, or the South of France, or Algiers for the winter."

"Anywhere you like, good doctor."

"A voyage to the West Indies might be of service," said Doctor Moore, "but he will require quiet and care here first for some weeks."

"You will let me see him as soon as you can?"

"Yes, I promise it; without excitement he may be better in a month."

"A month? Am I never to see him for a month?" she cried, forgetting the weary weeks that she had let him languish, believing her, too, the victim of a worse passion than mere fanaticism; however the results of her folly, credulity, and vanity, (for upon the latter her spiritual advisers had worked) had been most serious, not one of them ever dreamed that the experiment would end in the death of one man, and the ruined health of the other.

Lord Andingdron was told that his daughter was in Ireland with her husband; he made no sign, she had sinned in his eyes in having brought her name before the world, which had

placed misconstruction upon her indifference of the opinion of others; it had ended in expulsion from society; he refused to hear a word said in extenuation.

“It is awkward, Evelyn,” said Lord Andrin, “suppose we meet Michella in Ireland?”

“She will be too busy nursing Geoffrey, and will spare herself the mortification, I feel sure; besides, before autumn you will see they will go somewhere.”

“Have you set your heart on going anywhere for the winter, Evelyn?”

“No, I prefer home—the children thrive in Ireland, and I am very happy there.”

“My father is pleased that you do not play the fine lady, and want to go to Rome.”

“Rome has been rather a fatal place to one of our family, Herbert—I suppose nobody will ever know fully, the ins and outs of the story; it is to me almost incredible now; a case without parallel.”

“It is, every day it puzzles me more; it is provoking to know so little about an affair in one’s own family, but it will soon blow over.”

“Yes, sympathies have changed since Colonel Farnham died; those were his daughters who nursed Clara and Agnes, nice, pretty girls—poor things, the priests, and the worry, and one thing or another, killed their father.”

“Men in the regiment say he was not strong, and often had fits of depression which wore him down; they say he went on sick leave very often. He was stout, but stout men are liable to more illness sometimes than a thin fellow like myself.”

“You are not thin, Herbert.”

“Not a walking skeleton, but not portly and corpulent like *Papa*.”

Geoffrey and Lady Michella set off on their voyage, and a more broken down constitution could not be met with than Mr. Enwarry's. He could scarcely be recognised as the same man who stood so full of joy beside his bride on his wedding-day, so few years before. Now, he stooped and tottered in his gait, his breath was drawn with difficulty, and a wheezing sound at all times proclaimed his presence. Lady Michella saw her error, and listened to no

further advisers with regard to his religion as far as that went, he had peace for the remainder of his days. He dragged on a coughing existence, never knowing the comfort of health again, but by dint of keeping him in a suitable climate, he found what relief could be doled out to him, and for five years Lady Michella watched him, and bitterly lamented his death, when it took place in Sicily. She would not return to Ireland, but wrote a parting letter to her father and brother, and retired to the protection of a Sicilian Convent, to end her days as she had begun them, "in the odour of sanctity," under the yoke of Rome.

CHAPTER XXIII.

IGNOMINIOUSLY DISMISSED.

MAJOR TALBOT thought better of it than to drown himself; involved as he was in difficulties, life was sweet, though envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness rankled in his breast. He had raised money on the ground of his annuity so often, that he received none of it; moreover, his craft had led him to raise sums from several different parties, his *specious* manner had deceived each with whom he dealt. Latterly he had been connected with a robbery at Orleans, and with consummate skill had escaped detection. The very night after he had dined on Dora's money, he committed a theft at Astley's Amphitheatre, and enjoyed a period of extreme delight, for he got off safely with a sum of thirteen pounds, whilst an old man who some-

what resembled him, was taken up, tried, convicted, and sentenced to long imprisonment. It behoved Major Talbot to be cautious, and he rubbed his hands and chuckled over his good fortune. "I will stay in London," he said, "the great refuge for the destitute," and he had the audacity to apply at Astley's for employment; his poor and wretched appearance created pity in the tender-hearted man to whom he offered his services, and work was found for him about the stables; but he did not want work, only shelter and pay; the authorities soon found this out, and he was again thrown upon the world.

Sometimes he played, and with some of his old success; pleasure would then for awhile send the blood through his pulses, as if he had a hundred lives; he dressed decently again, played in a somewhat higher grade, and if he won, began to talk with a calm content, and would glide out of his poverty and adversity, and appear amongst men he had known before. On such occasions "he had always just arrived from the Continent." By gambling he managed to live, he had literally no other re-

source; he used long words, and made flighty speeches as of yore; boasted, to anyone who would listen, about his estates here, his estates there; averred that he was in London only for a short space to arrange about a mortgage; talked of money as mere dross, his hearers believing he must have the purse of Fortunatus; he spoke of sums vested in the stocks of every capital, English, Russian, French, or even American; he was fagged out with a long morning at his lawyer's, glad to rest, and to meet with anyone who would take a glass of sherry and a beef-steak with him; would his friends dine with him at such a place and at such an hour? Cards were exchanged, and false addresses given, (by him certainly); half-an-hour before the time the friends got a hurried note, dated at somebody's office, to say that unavoidable business detained Major Talbot, who hoped to meet the gentlemen another day.

This was shallow, one would think, but a game he carried on for weeks; then came a reverse, his money gone; he played again and again and lost, made a great show and bluster;

wrote cheques "upon his bankers" for the amount, and, of course, vanished, cursing his ill luck as he went down-stairs, and wishing he might break his neck upon the pavement.

Mercifully Providence is deaf to such men's aspirations. Major Talbot stepped too carefully to break his neck, and he walked along with a smile on his face, a stinging jest on his lips, and loathing towards all creation in his heart.

His wit had always been of a bitter kind ; his most caustic words had a sharpness, even when he pretended to be most serene ; he became lost to every one he had ever met, at length, and committed so many small robberies and mean peccadillos, that the police had their eye upon him, and he said he was forced to turn respectable. He sold lucifer matches, and pen knives, tried a book-stall, but got a reprimand about some ghastly looking engravings which he exposed for sale, and they were recognised as stolen property ; tried herb doctoring, and had a store of phials with a lizard, a frog, or a scorpion in spirits of wine,

but people wanted faith ; his powdered sage or wormwood did not sell, and the policemen told him to "move on." He never went far from London ; sometimes he would try a little country inn, where horses must stop to bait, just as far off as he could walk, and there he would have luncheon, and pick up a little at times ; people were not on the *qui vive* everywhere at once ; besides, the country air did him good, he said.

His walks came to an end at last ; he had no new direction left ; he did not dare to appear at the same place after anything unpleasant had occurred, so he was stopped in his excursions.

A slave to evil ways and bad passions, he had a legacy of thought, and that he strove to drive from him ; he had no hope of a higher existence, and said he only looked for complete annihilation to rid him from the intolerable burden of human life.

If curiosity should lead you to wander about London at midnight, and see the population who are invisible by day, you may chance to meet Major Talbot, coming from some low

music hall or haunt of ignoble play ; utterly worthless.

In London there are companies for everything ; he tried several, and finally enrolled himself amongst the members of a penny oyster society, and obtained a stall. Oysters are sold in thousands nightly during the season, and are grateful to those whose throats are parched with their vitriolic libations at the gin palace, or by those who have just encountered the heat and dust of one of the minor theatres at the eastern end of London ; these troop out and greedily devour the contents of the nearest oyster-stall, where the seller repeats " Only a penny a lot," and politely hands one by one the delicious mouthful ; a candle screened with paper flickers over the stand ; oyster-shells form the candlestick, oyster-shells form even ornaments.

The oyster-seller scorns the gaslight, and protects his dip, and replaces it with affectionate care.

Major Talbot succeeded for a time with one of these stalls, which was let out to him ; his manner was all suavity towards his poor but

noisy customers ; however, the company found that his accounts and theirs did not tally, so he was ignominiously dismissed, and called a cheat.

He was beginning to tire of it, for on cold wet nights the oysterman has no protection, and Major Talbot said the exposure did not suit his constitution ; they could not make him refund, for he had nothing, he was not worth imprisoning for debt ; the oyster-company used the same expressions that had been applied to him relative to the Castle Talbot estate at Clooneden.

CHAPTER XXIV.

EVENING TINTS.

ELIZA BATTING shed many tears over Dora and her illness, which she still looked upon as the fruits of over-anxiety about family affairs and sorrow at the death of her brother-in-law.

“You see,” she said, to Gertrude, “she has had too much misery; her mother died in a dreadful way, and she has had no comfort of her days.”

“How no comfort? She always looked nice.”

“You saw but little of her, ma’am; her mother’s death left her unprotected, and her guardian was cruel and tiresome; then she got all the care of the Miss Farnhams; and the fever was very severe at Croydon, and not one

friend came near Miss Dora, not even the father of the children."

"Did Lady Meath not see her, then?"

"Never once; we might have been all dead. Nobody knew where we were, only Sir Bishop Broom, I mean Lombard, he found us out; that is, the young children."

"And not Miss Handon?"

"No, people at that time used to say she was going to marry the colonel, and I dare say Sir Bishop heard so, too."

"Who saw him, then?"

"Why the nurse and I did, but I did not know who he was then, he admired Miss Margaret and Master Charles; and Miss Dora seemed half annoyed at all the presents he bought for them."

"How many children are there?"

"Now there are only four, one died whilst the regiment was at Naghan, the colonel had taken Mr. Enwarry's house for us, but he went away."

"Did the child die there?" asked Gertrude.

"No, ma'am, her grandfather doated upon Miss Margaret, and Miss Handon and the doctor

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Gertrude talked all this over with Bishop, who liked to listen to particulars about Dora ; he heard about the journey, and the kind, attentive doctor, of whom the little girl had been so fond, and he did not betray Dora's secret ; Gertrude did not know the doctor was the Melville Morton whose history and worth were well known to Sir Bishop Lombard ; he was the only earthly friend in whom she had confided, and she did so to save him the humiliation of more refusals on her part. It was he only who knew what the loss of the "Queen of Wangoa" had been to her, and though, without doubt, a thousand hearts had ached and eyes had swelled with regretful tears over the thought of passengers and crew, none could know more fully than Dora the complete signification of the words "a total wreck."

Nature, the great artist, brushed over the foliage with glory and autumnal tints, golden, reddish, amber, brown, according to her delicious fancies. Even Paris was resplendent with October sunshine, and out towards the Arc de Triomphe the carriages rolled in constant succession. Gertrude made Dora drive along the fine avenue, and engaged her in quiet chat, and was glad when she could cause a smile to light up her poor face, nor was the task very difficult, for Dora had never given way to selfishness, nor did she parade her sorrows now ; only strength and endurance had given way together. She hoped with time to rise superior to her grief, but she was very humble since her confession to Sir Bishop Lombard.

"I ought to go, Gertrude," she said, as a dead leaf or two fell from the high branches and fluttered into the carriage at their feet.

"We think of staying here for the winter."

"Yes, so Aunt Meath told me. Gertrude, you have been so very good to me."

"Then do not leave us ; Charlie and I shall break our hearts if you do."

"Do not say, break your hearts," she said, solemnly.

"Well, you know Charlie and I have grown so fond of you."

"I do know it, with thankfulness. I should like to be with the children at Christmas, after which my Charlie is to go to school."

"You are like a hen fussing about her chickens."

"I believe I am, Gertrude; they are all I have to live for."

"Not quite all, Dora."

"Yes, quite all."

"That is too bad, Charlie would say, and what about me?"

"You and Charlie have each other."

"And Bishop Lombard?"

"Knows all about me," said Dora.

"Then you really wish to go?"

"I do, really."

"My aunt will be sorry, she has become fond of you, too."

"She is very good."

"I shall tell her you are determined, and a trifle obstinate," said Gertrude.

"I think Aunt Meath will say I am right."

The sun got covered with a thick cloud before their drive was over, and the wind told a tale about the north and waving firs and hoary oaks that could stand a biting blast and the breath of frost and snow. More leaves fell, those early autumn breezes dislodged them, just as a gentle hint to the others of what was coming in a few short weeks for them. Gertrude noticed a brilliancy in Dora's eyes and all the evening afterwards a bright spot was on her cheeks, and her spirits had grown higher with the thought of getting back to those she loved.

Hector Farnham fulfilled all his grandfather's hopes, associated freely with the tenantry, and was everywhere respected as the old man's heir. He was fitted for a high position and the possession of wealth and honour ; his superior education, his honesty, kindness, every qualification rendered him an honour to his name, and his young brother promised to follow in his footsteps, and to do credit to the

tender care of his aunt and the judicious training he received.

Sir Bishop Lombard presented himself at Claydon Eaves, and met with the reception of an old friend. Batting was most demonstrative in her delight at seeing him, and began a most woman-like course of castle-building at once, for she was sure he came for her mistress, who could not but reward his long affection; the good Eliza esteemed him for his fidelity, and being not devoid of a little romance, like the rest of her sex, she felt warmly in his favour. She was most discreet, however, and said nothing in the servants' hall, but she watched every look of Sir Bishop's, and felt assured the lovers were happily conversing about the future every time a few words passed between them.

Bishop found Dora the beloved of all. Mr. Farnham seemed to have taken a new lease of his life, and his old age was beautiful, and full of charity; he was slow to judge of any one, and seldom gave a hasty word,—never a rash opinion.

“I judged harshly once,” he said to Miss

Fanny, "I will consider well before I do so again."

"You are right, brother ; so shall I."

Miss Fanny managed the household with strict and yet gentle rule ; for many years she had done so, and she continued to manage the Hall as well as the relief of her poor neighbours. Dora seemed to bring forth all her tenderness ; she had never been so happy in her life as since she and the children had come to Claydon Eaves for their home.

Children the girls could not longer be called ; they had a cousin of Marie Vertmann's more as a companion in their walks than as a governess ; the cousin talked of Marie's happy marriage, and her darling children.

Miss Greystones left them from Lady Meath's, and was soon at home in her new situation with Lady Mildred Elliott. Later in life, Lord Andrin chose her to superintend the education of his little Clara and Agnes.

Her name was Geraldine, but she only signed the initial G. Greystones, as the names did

not go well. They were not euphonious, she thought; and few of her pupils knew her Christian name, as she disliked it. This was her only little weakness. Dora loved and esteemed her as a tried friend; but since her poignant sorrow, she felt better without her ever watchful eye; it distressed her, since she suspected Miss Greystones was not ignorant of her grief; indeed, that she had even discovered its source. So, when after Christmas Charles was sent to school, and it was settled for the girls to live with their grandfather, Dora wrote for Fraulein Meta Vertmann, and Miss Greystones took a tender leave.

A thousand little acts of kindness filled up Dora's days; her fine embroideries were cast aside, not cared for any longer. She would pass her time in useful ways, and did not require the aid of hard patterns, or those difficult stitches in needlework.

Time did not go too slowly; a calm had settled on her days, and a holy patience of spirit pervaded all she did. This escaped her so unconsciously that she was not aware how like an angel she became, but every word and

look spoke patience ; she little thought how patient her words were, or yet how sweet and mournful was their cadence.

Sir Bishop Lombard knew it all, and looked on her as one who had done with distrust or expectation, with all care, or anxiety of who was coming or who was going away ; she had no dread of further parting, and gave herself up to a season of peace, to a golden sunset. Life's day has many tints, but every hue with her was lost in the glorious evening clouds, purple, delicate pink, rose, all changed by the alchemy of peace.

She was very happy when Hector passed his examination with credit, and promised a worthy University career ; and very happy indeed, when Warna, her favourite, whose character had developed into splendour and perfection, married Sir Bishop Lombard ; they were suited to each other, as she had said.

Dora left Adelaïs, the light of the household, at Claydon Eaves, Miss Fanny and her brother likely to finish out long days of usefulness, and, at eight-and-twenty, Dora's life on earth went out.

She died with one last wish upon her lips :
it was accomplished, for they laid her beside—
“Ethel’s George” and “Golden Pippin.”

THE END.

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